

POEMS



LOWELL



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"JUST THEN THE GHOST DREW UP HIS CHAIR
"AND SAID, 'MY NAME IS STANDISH.'"—Page 309.

Poems

BY

James Russell Lowell

*VIGNETTE EDITION, WITH ONE HUNDRED NEW
ILLUSTRATIONS*

BY

Edmund M. Ashe



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PART FIRST.

I.

FAIR as a summer dream was Margaret,—
Such dream as in a poet's soul might start,
Musing of old loves while the moon doth set :
Her hair was not more sunny than her heart,
Though like a natural golden coronet
It circled her dear head with careless art,
Mocking the sunshine, that would fain have lent
To its frank grace a richer ornament.

II.

His loved-one's eyes could poet ever speak,
So kind, so dewy, and so deep were hers,—
But, while he strives, the choicest phrase, too weak,
Their glad reflection in his spirit blurs ;
As one may see a dream dissolve and break
Out of his grasp when he to tell it stirs,
Like that sad Dryad doomed no more to bless
The mortal who revealed her loveliness.

III.

She dwelt forever in a region bright,
Peopled with living fancies of her own,
Where naught could come but visions of delight,
Far, far aloof from earth's eternal moan :
A summer cloud thrilled through with rosy light,
Floating beneath the blue sky all alone,
Her spirit wandered by itself, and won
A golden edge from some unsetting sun.

IV.

The heart grows richer that its lot is poor,—
God blesses want with larger sympathies,—

A Legend of Brittany.

Love enters gladliest at the humble door,
 And makes the cot a palace with his eyes;—
 So Margaret's heart a softer beauty wore,
 And grew in gentleness and patience wise.
 For she was but a simple herdsman's child,
 A lily chance-sown in the rugged wild.

V.

There was no beauty of the wood or field
 But she its fragrant bosom-secret knew,
 Nor any but to her would freely yield
 Some grace that in her soul took root and grew
 Nature to her glowed ever new-revealed,
 All rosy-fresh with innocent morning dew,
 And looked into her heart with dim, sweet eyes
 That left it full of sylvan memories.

VI.

O, what a face was hers to brighten light,
 And give back sunshine with an added glow,
 To wile each moment with a fresh delight,
 And part of memory's best contentment grow!
 O, how her voice, as with an inmate's right,
 Into the strangest heart would welcome go,
 And make it sweet, and ready to become
 Of white and gracious thoughts the chosen home!

VII.

None looked upon her but he straightway thought
 Of all the greenest depths of country cheer,
 And into each one's heart was freshly brought
 What was to him the sweetest time of year,
 So was her every look and motion fraught
 With out-of-door delights and forest lere;
 Not the first violet on a woodland lea
 Seemed a more visible gift of spring than she.

VIII.

Is love learned only out of poets' books?
 Is there not somewhat in the dropping flood,
 And in the nunneries of silent nooks,
 And in the murmured longing of the wood,
 That could make Margaret dream of lovelorn looks,
 And stir a thrilling mystery in her blood
 More trembly secret than Aurora's tear
 Shed in the bosom of an eglare?

IX.

Full many a sweet forewarning hath the mind,
 Full many a whispering of vague desire,
 Ere comes the nature destined to unbind
 Its virgin zone, and all its deeps inspire,—
 Low stirrings in the leaves, before the wind
 Wakes all the green strings of the forest lyre,
 Faint heatings in the calyx, ere the rose
 Its warm, voluptuous breast doth all unclose.

X.

Long in its dim recesses pines the spirit,
 Wildered and dark, despairingly alone;
 Though many a shape of beauty wander near it,
 And many a wild and half-remembered tone



"NOT THE FIRST VIOLET ON A WOODLAND LEA."

Tremble from the divine abyss to cheer it,
 Yet still it knows that there is only one
 Before whom it can kneel and tribute bring,
 Yet be far less a vassal than a king.

XI.

To feel a want, yet scarce know what it is,
 To seek one nature that is always new,
 Whose glance is warmer than another's kiss,
 Whom we can bare our inmost beauty to
 Nor feel deserted afterwards,—for this
 But with our destined comate we can do,—

A Legend of Brittany.

Such longing instinct fills the mighty scope
Of the young soul with one mysterious hope,

XII.

Naught as a maiden's soul is bountiful,
For beauty's law is bounty: it must be
That, when the heart with blessedness is full,
It droops into a sated apathy,
Unless the choice blooms of that bliss it cull
To crown another with, and make it free
Of beauty's harvest, which unfruitful lies,
Wanting the ripening light of loving eyes.

XIII.

So Margaret's heart grew brimming with the lore
Of love's enticing secrets; and although
She had found none to cast it down before,
Yet oft to Fancy's chapel she would go
To pay her vows, and count the rosary o'er
Of her love's promised graces:—haply so
Miranda's hope had pictured Ferdinand
Long ere the gaunt wave tossed him on the strand.

XIV.

A new-made star that swims the lonely gloom,
Unwedded yet and longing for the sun,
Whose beams, the bride-gifts of the lavish groom,
Blithely to crown the virgin planet run,
Her being was, watching to see the bloom
Of love's fresh sunrise roofing one by one
Its clouds with gold, a triumph-arch to be
For him who came to hold her heart in fee.

XV.

Her sun arose to redden in eclipse,
Alas! too soon, ere yet 't was risen wholly,—
But let us not unseal the morrow's lips;
Swiftly enough thou comest, Melancholy,
And what we win of earth's contentment slips
From our forlorn embraces not too slowly:
Let the bright mist of morning cover now
From our pleased eyes the future's sullen brow.

XVI.

Not far from Margaret's cottage dwelt a knight
Of the proud Templars, a sworn celibate,
Whose heart in secret fed upon the light

And dew of her ripe beauty, through the gate
Of his close vow catching what gleams he might
Of the free heaven, and cursing—all too late—
The cruel faith whose black walls hemmed him in
And turned life's crowning bliss to deadly sin.

XVII.

For he had met her in the wood by chance,
And, having drunk her beauty's wildering spell,
His heart shook like the pennon of a lance
That quivers in a breeze's sudden swell,
And thenceforth, in a close enfolded trance,
From mistily golden deep to deep he fell;
The earth did waver and fade far away
Beneath the hope in whose warm arms he lay.

XVIII.

A dark, proud man he was, whose half-blown youth
Had shed its blossoms even in opening,
Leaving a few that with more winning ruth
Trembling around grave manhood's stem might cling,
More sad than cheery, making, in good sooth,
Like the fringed gentian, a late autumn spring:—
A twilight nature, braided light and gloom,
A youth half smiling by an open tomb.

XIX.

Fair as an angel, who yet inly wore
A wrinkled heart foreboding his near fall;
Who saw him alway wished to know him more,
As if he were some fate's defiant thrall
And nursed a dreaded secret at his core;
Little he loved, but power most of all,
And that he seemed to scorn, as one who knew
By what foul paths men choose to crawl thereto.

XX.

Yet by long sufferance this love had grown
Into a passion with him, that would make
As great a triumph for a child o'erthrown
As for a giant, and, self-blinded, take
Ambition's meanest footstool for a throne:
So day by day he nursed a bitterer ache
At heart, and learned to see no wider realm
Than could be spanned by a grand-master's helm.



"FOR HE HAD MET HER IN THE WOOD BY CHANCE."

XXI.

He could seem noble a rich end to gain,
 And he would talk of nobleness, as 't were
 A gift as cheap and common as the rain;
 Praise was a thing it seemed he could not bear,
 Wrapping himself therefrom in high disdain,
 Yet his most careless deeds were done with care,
 And, if they were unheeded or unseen,
 A passing shade of gall would cloud his mien.

XXII.

He had been noble, but some great deceit
 Had turned his better instinct to a vice:
 He strove to think the world was all a cheat,
 That power and fame were cheap at any price,
 That the sure way of being shortly great
 Was even to play life's game with loaded dice
 Since he had tried the honest play and found
 That vice and virtue differed but in sound.

XXIII.

But none can wholly put his heart away,
 And, though he aimed to act upon a plan
 Of steady fraud to keep his soul at bay,
 Yet sometimes through his breast an instinct ran,
 That roused the memory of a purer day
 Ere life to be a bitter toil began:
 A self-made minotaur, half man half beast,
 He bound himself and longed to be released.

XXIV.

Spurn at the world and it will deem you great,
 Scorn it if you would win its high esteem,
 Make your own chance, life is too short to wait
 Until the side of error kicks the beam,
 Set down your value at your own huge rate,
 The world will pay it;—such was his weak scheme
 To make the most of life, and it serves well
 Those who would go no deeper than the shell.

XXV.

Yet Margaret's sight redeemed him for a space
 From his own thralldom; man could never be
 A hypocrite when first such maiden grace
 Smiled in upon his heart; the agony
 Of wearing all day long a lying face

Fell lightly from him, and, a moment free,
Erect with wakened faith in spirit stood
And scorned the weakness of its demon-mood.

XXVI.

Like a sweet wind-harp to him was her thought,
Which would not let the common air come near,

Till from its dim enchantment
it had caught
A musical tenderness that
brimmed his ear
With sweetness more ethereal
than aught
Save silver-dropping snatches
that whilere
Rained down from some sad
angel's faithful harp
To cool her fallen lover's
anguish sharp.

XXVII.

Deep in the forest was a little
dell
High overarched with the
leafy sweep
Of a broad oak, through whose
gnarled roots there fell
A slender rill that sung itself
asleep,
Where its continuous toil had
scooped a well
To please the fairy folk ;
breathlessly deep
The stillness was, save when
the dreaming brook
From its small urn a drizzly
murmur shook.

XXVIII.

The wooded hills sloped
upward all around

With gradual rise, and made an even rim,
So that it seemed a mighty casque unbound
From some huge Titan's brow to lighten him,
Ages ago, and left upon the ground,
Where the slow soil had mossed it to the brim.



"DEEP IN THE FOREST WAS A LITTLE DELL."

Till after countless centuries it grew
Into this dell, the haunt of noontide dew.

XXIX.

Dim vistas, sprinkled o'er with sun-flecked green,
Wound through the thickset trunks on every side,
And, toward the west, in fancy may be seen
A gothic window in its blazing pride,
When the low sun, two arching elms between,
Lit up the leaves beyond, which, autumn-dyed
With lavish hues, would into splendor start,
Shaming the labored panes of richest art.

XXX.

Here, leaning once against the old oak's trunk.
Mordred, for such was the young Templar's name,
Saw Margaret come; unseen, the falcon shrunk
From the meek dove; sharp thrills of tingling flame
Made him forget that he was vowed a monk,
And all the outworks of his pride o'ercame:
Flooded he seemed with bright delicious pain,
As if a star had burst within his brain.

XXXI.

Such power hath beauty and frank innocence:
A flower burst forth, that sunshine glad to bless,
Even from his love's long leafless stem; the sense
Of exile from Hope's happy realm grew less,
And thoughts of childish peace, he knew not whence,
Thronged round his heart with many an old caress,
Melting the frost there into pearly dew
That mirrored back his nature's morning-blue.

XXXII.

She turned and saw him, but she felt no dread,
Her purity, like adamantine mail,
Did so encircle her; and yet her head
She drooped, and made her golden hair her veil,
Through which a glow of rosiest lustre spread,
Then faded, and anon she stood all pale,
As snow o'er which a blush of northern-light
Suddenly reddens, and as soon grows white.

XXXIII.

She thought of Tristrem and of Lancilot,
Of all her dreams, and of kind fairies' might,
And how that dell was deemed a haunted spot,



"HOW THEY WENT HOME TOGETHER THROUGH THE WOOD."

Until there grew a mist before her sight,
And where the present was she half forgot,
Borne backward through the realms of old delight,—
Then, starting up awake, she would have gone,
Yet almost wished it might not be alone.

XXXIV. .

How they went home together through the wood,
And how all life seemed focused into one
Thought-dazzling spot that set ablaze the blood,
What need to tell? Fit language there is none
For the heart's deepest things. Who ever wooed
As in his boyish hope he would have done?
For, when the soul is fullest, the hushed tongue
Voicelessly trembles like a lute unstrung.

XXXV.

But all things carry the heart's messages
And know it not, nor doth the heart well know,
But nature hath her will; even as the bees,
Blithe go-betweens, fly singing to and fro
With the fruit-quickenning pollen;—hard if these
Found not some all unthought-of way to show
Their secret each to each; and so they did,
And one heart's flower-dust into the other slid.

XXXVI.

Young hearts are free; the selfish world it is
That turns them miserly and cold as stone,
And makes them clutch their fingers on the bliss,
Which but in giving truly is their own;—
She had no dreams of barter, asked not his,
But gave hers freely as she would have thrown
A rose to him, or as that rose gives forth
Its generous fragrance, thoughtless of its worth.

XXXVII.

We only prize those hearts that do not prize
Themselves: love by its nature shrinks
From any thought of grovelling merchandise,
And, like a humming bird a-wing, it drinks
From flowerlike souls the honeydew that lies
Wide open to the air, and never thinks
Of its own worth or theirs, or aught beside
But joy and sunlight and life's morning tide.

A Legend of Brittany.

XXXVIII.

Her summer nature felt a need to bless,
 And a like longing to be blest again;
 So, from her sky-like spirit, gentleness
 Dropt ever like a sunlit fall of rain,
 And his beneath drank in the bright caress
 As thirstily as would a parched plain,
 That long hath watched the showers of sloping gray
 For ever, ever, falling far away.

XXXIX.

Now Margaret hath gained her secret bower,
 Where musing she gazed up into the blue
 Calm heaven, which looked as it could never lower,
 Now that her happy dreams had come so true:
 Life seemed the birth of that last crowded hour,
 And, all impearled with sunshine and fresh dew,
 It lay before her like a summer walk,
 An hour of trembling looks and ravished talk.

XL.

O, might life fade away and gently cease
 While the heart vibrates like a golden string,
 Ending in music and forgetful peace,
 While untried hope is full of sinewy spring
 As a new bow, ere yet by slow degrees
 Earth's dust hath clotted round the soul's fresh wing
 And made us flutter, sink, and crawl, and die,
 Heart-broken by our instinct for the sky!

XLI.

But Earth is Earth, and beautiful is she
 Our mother, from whose fertile breast we draw
 Half of our nature: it is destiny
 That we flee to her from the gloomy maw
 Of the unknown; for we can never see
 More than a fragment of the spirit's law,
 And clasp her hand most closely when we might
 Be weaned at once, and feed on nectarous light.

XLII.

Sorrow, there seemeth more of thee in life
 Than we can bear and live, and yet we bear;
 And thy endurance is the desperate knife
 Wherewith the cable of our dreams we share,
 To steer out boldly through the monstrous strife

Of surging action and learn how to dare,
And drive right onward through the grasping seas
To Will and Power, which give the soul true ease.

XLIII.

Yet let us dream while we are anchored yet,
If so some portion of the destined ache
That haunts the spirit here we may forget :
Who never dreamed is never well awake ;
The stars of life one after other set,
And, while we can with faith, 'tis good to make
The world seem what it was when first we turned
Saw its broad stretch, and for its triumphs burned.

XLIV.

Could Margaret have seen the shaft of woe
Which fate even now was drawing to the head,
Even in the very twanging of the bow,
Whose aim must strike her soaring gladness dead.
She would have shut her eyes upon the blow,
And all her soul upon her lover shed,
Though life went with it,—so the heart is fain
To gamble present bliss for future pain.

XLV.

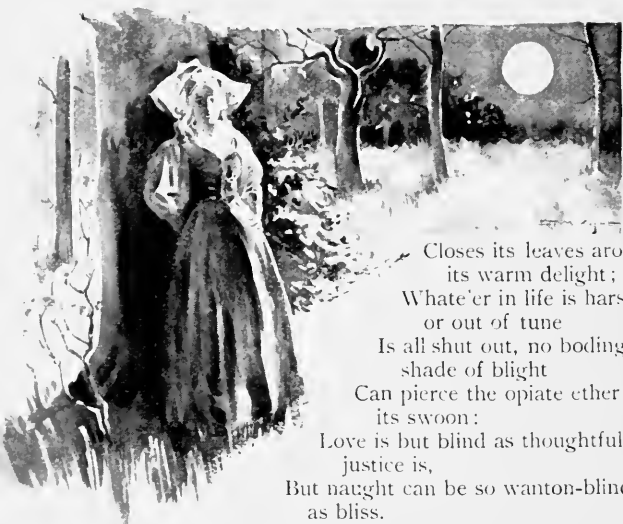
No matter, woe is short and life is long :
We prate too much of this world's flitting grief,
Thoughtless of the unimaginable throng
Of after lives that bring the soul relief
And countless chances more : like oak-trees strong,
We shed our frail lives from us, leaf by leaf,
And each new death but brings the spirit more
Broad worlds to win and beauty to adore.

XLVI.

So, Margaret, let thy heart leap up to hear
Each night, the rustle of the leaves which tells
That the long dreamed-of ecstasy is near,
That made the day seem empty : O, what swells
Of brightly mingled, sudden hope and fear
Hast thou, awaiting him since curfew bells
Have died away, and Hesper in the west
Trembled as doth the joy within thy breast !

XLVII.

How should she dream of ill? the heart filled quite
With sunshine, like the shepherd's-clock at noon,



Closes its leaves around
its warm delight ;
Whate'er in life is harsh
or out of tune
Is all shut out, no boding
shade of blight
Can pierce the opiate ether of
its swoon :
Love is but blind as thoughtful
justice is,
But naught can be so wanton-blind
as bliss.

XLVIII.

"AWAITING HIM SINCE CURFEW
BELLS HAVE DIED AWAY."

When Mordred came, all soul
she seemed to be,
And quite broke through the clay's entangling mesh,
His spirit with her eyes she seemed to see,
And feel its motion in her very flesh ;
And, when he went, his radiant memory
Robed all her fantasies with glory fresh,
As if an angel, quitting her awhile,
Left round her heart the halo of his smile.

XLIX.

Bright passion of young hearts, like the huge burst
Of some grand symphony all unaware
Storming the soul, majestic as the first
Sight of the rousing ocean—poor and bare,
And barren of all life as spots accurst,
Thou mak'st all other joys, once deemed most rare !
So Margaret thought when Mordred went away
And made day night, or came and made night day.

L.

All beauty and all life he was to her ;
She questioned not his love, she only knew

That she loved him, and not a pulse could stir
 In her whole frame but quivered through and through
 With this glad thought, and was a minister
 To do him fealty and service true,
 Like golden ripples hasting to the land
 To wreck their freight of sunshine on the strand.

LI.

O dewy dawn of love! O hopes that are
 Hung high, like the cliff-swallow's perilous nest,
 Most like to fall when fullest, and that jar
 With every heavier billow! O unrest
 Than balmiest deeps of quiet sweeter far!
 How did ye triumph now in Margaret's breast,
 Making it readier to shrink and start
 Than the pond-lily's golden quivering heart.

LII.

Here let us pause: O, would the soul might ever
 Achieve its immortality in youth,
 When nothing yet hath damped its high endeavor
 After the starry energy of truth!
 Here let us pause, and for a moment sever
 This gleam of sunshine from the days unruth
 That sometime come to all, for it is good
 To lengthen to the last a sunny mood.

LIII.

Hope skims o'er life as we may sometimes see
 A butterfly, whose home is in the flowers,
 Blown outward far over the moaning sea,
 Remembering in vain its odorous bowers;
 It flutters o'er the drear immensity
 To sink ere long: there are not
 many hours
 Ere the heart wonders at the simple hope
 That danced so gayly forth with fate
 to cope.

LIV.

But Faith comes ever after Hope is fled,
 Hope's ghost, with sadder yet with fairer face,
 To tell us that she is but seeming dead;
 That earth is but her body's burial place,
 Whence flowers shall spring, on lowly hearts to shed
 A fragrant prophecy of heaven's grace,
 And that we truly could not see her, even,
 Till she had flitted to her home in heaven.

"BLOWN OUTWARD FAR OVER
 THE MOANING SEA."



A LEGEND OF BRITTANY.

PART SECOND.

I.

As one who, from the sunshine and the green,
Enters the solid darkness of a cave,
Nor knows what precipice or pit unseen



"NOR KNOWS WHAT PRECIPICE
OR PIT UNSEEN."

May yawn before him with
its sudden grave,
And, with hushed breath, doth
often forward lean,
Deeming he hears the splashing
of a wave
Dimly below, or feels a
damper air
From out some dreary chasm,
he knows not where :—

II.

So, from the sunshine and the
green of love,
We enter on our story's
darker part ;
And, though the horror of it
well may move
An impulse of repugnance
in the heart,
Yet let us think, that, as there's
naught above
The all-embracing atmosphere
of Art,
So also there is naught that
falls below
Her generous reach, though
grimed with guilt and woe.

III.

Her fittest triumph is to show that good
Lurks in the heart of evil evermore,
That love, though scorned, and outcast, and withstood,

Can without end forgive, and yet have store ;
 God's love and man's are of the self-same blood,
 And He can see that always at the door
 Of foulest hearts the angel-nature yet
 Knocks to return and cancel all its debt.

IV.

It ever is weak falsehood's destiny
 That her thick mask turns crystal to let through
 The unsuspecting eyes of honesty ;
 But Margaret's heart was too sincere and true
 Aught but plain truth and faithfulness to see,
 And Mordred's for a time a little grew
 To be like hers, won by the mild reproof
 Of those kind eyes that kept all doubt aloof.

V.

Full oft they met, as dawn and twilight meet
 In northern climes ; she full of growing day,
 As he of darkness, which before her feet
 Shrank gradual, and faded quite away,
 Soon to return ; for power made love sweet
 To him, and, when his will had gained full sway,
 The taste began to pall ; for never power
 Can sate the hungry soul beyond an hour.

VI.

At first he loved her truly ; its far goal
 His weary heart had reached and sunk to rest :
 She seemed a white-browed angel sent to roll
 The heavy stone away which long had prest,
 As in a living sepulchre, his soul :
 But soon the custom'd nature of his breast
 Awoke, and in its iron hand once more
 Shook the fierce lash that seared him to the core.

VII.

A healthy love of power thaws the ice
 Wherewith sloth fetters oft the gushing will ;
 But when the soul lusts after it, no vice
 Is half so deadly ; then it tries its skill
 In heaping for its sin some monstrous price
 To make it precious ; but, like morning, still
 Comes the pale afterthought, and makes it see
 The harlot whose poor slave it crouched to be.

VIII.

Such lust in Mordred's soul had dug its lair,
Taking for ransom all good impulses :
Love might have saved him, which makes virtues rare
Even of our vices, as, upon his knees,
Stout Kempion kissed the dragon thrice, and there
Found in its stead the maiden, his heart's peace ;
But he loved Margaret only for the power
It gave him o'er her heart, her virgin dower.

IX.

And, having gained it, still he craved for more ;
Margaret could yield no more save innocence,
And this his thought would often hover o'er,
Poising to swoop, not for the glut of sense,
But to enjoy his mastery to the core,
And probe the depth of his bad influence ;
Such hunger gnawed him and such fierce unrest,
As one who hath a serpent in his breast.

X.

He wrestled with his will, he felt the shame,
The crowning anguish, which the spirit feels
When a pure instinct flies to whence it came,
And in its place a slimy viper steals,
Lulling asleep our guardian sense of blame,
Till on its throne our better nature reels :
He felt the shame, the anguish and the sin,
Yet oped his heart and let the foul thing in.

XI.

So to his will he won her by degrees,
Working upon her faith with secret wear,
Steadfast and silent as the tireless seas
Gain on the shore ; his thirst he could not bear,
Once having drained love's beaker to the lees,
And, could he quench its flame, he felt no care
If he drank poison : so at last he fell,
Winning the crime he plotted for so well.

XII.

He fell as doth the tempter ever fall,
Even in the gaining of his loathsome end ;
God doth not work as man works, but makes all
The crooked paths of ill to goodness tend ;
Let him judge Margaret ! If to be the thrall

Of love, and faith too generous to defend
Its very life from him she loved, be sin,
What hope of grace may the seducer win?

XIII.

Grim-hearted world, that look'st with Levite eyes
On those poor fallen by too much faith in man,
She that upon thy freezing threshold lies,
starved to more sinning by thy savage ban,—
Seeking that refuge because foulest vice
More godlike than thy virtue is, whose span
Shuts out the wretched only,—is more free
From all her crimes than thou wilt ever be!

XIV.

Thou wilt not let her wash thy dainty feet
With such salt things as tears, or with rude hair
Dry them, soft Pharisee, that sit'st at meat
With him who made her such, and speak'st him fair
Leaving God's wandering lamb the while to bleat
Unheeded, shivering in the pitiless air:
Thou hast made prisoned virtue show more wan
And haggard than a vice to look upon.

XV.

Now many months flew by, and weary grew
To Margaret the sight of happy things;
Blight fell on all her flowers, instead of dew;
Shut round her heart were now the joyous wings
Wherewith it wont to soar; yet not untrue,
Though tempted much, her woman's nature clings
To its first pure belief, and with sad eyes
Looks backward o'er the gate of Paradise.

XVI.

Not wholly desolate, nor quite shut out
From peace, are hearts that love, though hopelessly;
Though with rude billows compassed all about,
They toss, lone shipwrecks, on a dreary sea,
Yet love hath glories which the eye of doubt
Withers to look on, for he holds the key
Which opens in the soul that inner cell,
Where in deep peace the heavenly instincts dwell.

XVII.

So Margaret, though Mordred came less oft,
And winter frowned where spring had laughed before,

A Legend of Brittany.

In his strange eyes, yet half her sadness doffed,
 And in her silent patience loved him more :
 Sorrow had made her soft heart yet more soft,
 And a new life within her own she bore
 Which made her tenderer, as she felt it move
 Beneath her breast,—a refuge for her love.

XVIII.

This babe, she thought, would surely bring him back,
 And be a bond forever them between ;
 Before its eyes the sullen tempest-rack
 Would fade, and leave the face of heaven serene ;
 And love's return doth more than fill the lack,
 Which in his absence withered the heart's green :
 And yet a dim forboding still would flit
 Between her and her hope to darken it.

XIX.

She could not figure forth a happy fate,
 Even for this life from heaven so newly come ;
 The earth must needs be doubly desolate
 To him scarce parted from a fairer home :
 Such boding heavier on her bosom sate
 One night, as, standing in the twilight gloam,
 She strained her eyes beyond that dizzy verge
 At whose foot faintly breaks the future's surge.

XX.

Poor little spirit ! naught but shame and woe
 Nurse the sick heart whose lifeblood nurses thine :
 Yet not those only ; love hath triumphed so,
 As for thy sake makes sorrow more divine :
 And yet, though thou be pure, the world is foe
 To purity, if born in such a shrine ;
 And, having trampled it for struggling thence,
 Smiles to itself and calls it Providence.

XXI.

O mockery, that aught unruth and hard
 Behind God's name its ugly face shall veil !
 Sad human nature, that o'er flint and shard
 With bleeding feet shrink'st onward wan and pale,
 Believing 'tis thy doom to be ill-starred,
 Since e'en Religion sanctions the foul tale,
 And hating God, because man's creeds but grant
 What they his blessings call—toil, woe and want !

XXII.

As thus she mused, a shadow seemed to rise
 From out her thought, and turn to dreariness
 All blissful hopes and sunny memories,
 And the quick blood doth curdle up and press
 About her heart, which seemed to shut its eyes
 And hush itself, as who with shuddering guess
 Harks through the gloom and dreads e'en now to feel
 Through his hot breast the icy slide of steel.

XXIII.

But, at that heart beat, while in dread she was,
 In the low wind the honey suckles gleam,
 A dewy thrill flits through the heavy grass,
 And, looking forth, she saw, as in a dream,
 Within the wood the moonlight's shadowy mass :
 Night's starry heart yearning to hers doth seem,
 And the deep sky, full-hearted with the moon,
 Folds round her all the happiness of June.

XXIV.

What fear could face a heaven and earth like this?
 What silveriest cloud could hang 'neath such a sky?
 A tide of wondrous and unwonted bliss
 Rolls back through all her pulses suddenly,
 As if some seraph, who had learned to kiss
 From the fair daughters of the world gone by,
 Has wedded so his fallen light with hers,
 Such sweet, strange joy through soul and body stirs.

XXV.

So God leads back in silence those who err
 From noble promptings, to his hope again;
 So gentle Nature plays the comforter
 To all who seek at man's proud door in vain :
 And gladly once again awoke in her
 The peace that long in drowsy dark had lain,
 And she could feel that hope is never flown,
 That God ne'er leaves the soul to grope alone.

XXVI.

Now seek we Mordred : He who did not fear
 The crime, yet fears the latent consequence :
 If it should reach a brother Templar's ear,
 It haply might be made a good pretence
 To cheat him of the hope he held most dear ;

For he had spared no thought's or deed's expense,
That by and by might help his wish to clip
Its darling bride—the high grand-mastership.



"UPON HIS CASEMENT, WITH A KNOTTED BROW,
HE LEANED AND MUSED."

XXVII.

Upon his casement, with a knotted brow,
He leaned and mused ; dark shadows came and past

O'er his pale cheek ; some dreadful tempting now
Coils round his heart, which struggles all aghast
And fain would shake it off, yet knows not how,
Then struggles less and less, and yields at last,
And the black serpent, colder and more cold,
Half sleeps, but tightens still its scaly fold.

XXVIII.

The apathy, ere a crime resolved is done,
Is scarce less dreadful than remorse for crime ;
By no allurements can the soul be won
From brooding o'er the weary creep of time :
Mordred stole forth into the happy sun,
Striving to hum a scrap of Breton rhyme,
But the sky struck him speechless, and he tried
In vain to summon up his callous pride.

XXIX.

In the court-yard a fountain leaped away,
A Triton blowing jewels through his shell
Into the sunshine ; Mordred turned away,
Weary because the stone face did not tell
Of weariness, nor could he bear to-day,
Heartsick, to hear the patient sink and swell
Of winds among the leaves, or golden bees
Drowsily humming in the orange-trees.

XXX.

All happy sights and sounds now came to him
Like a reproach : he wandered far and wide,
Following the lead of his unquiet whim,
But still there went a something at his side
That made the cool breeze hot, the sunshine dim ;
It would not flee, it could not be defied,
He could not see it, but he felt it there
By the damp chill that crept among his hair.

XXXI.

Day wore at last ; the evening star arose,
And throbbing in the sky grew red and set ;
Then with a guilty, wavering step he goes
To the hid nook where they so oft had met
In happier season, for his heart well knows
That he is sure to find poor Margaret
Watching and waiting there with lovelorn breast
Around her young dream's rudely scattered nest.

XXXII.

Swifter and paler than a sheeted ghost
Out of the heavy darkness glimmereth
To tell some widowed heart that all is lost,
He started close beside her with hard breath
And heavy, as of one long tempest-tost
On the wild main of guilty thoughts, where death
And life strive for the spirit, not the clay,
And death's lean hand hath wellnigh clutched its prey.

XXXIII.

"Sweet Margaret!" he said, but in his tone
A something froze her, as if duty tried
To mock the voice of love now long since flown,
And made her feel, with Mordred at her side,
More palpably and bitterly alone:
There stood they, she but doubly beautified
By her meek sadness, and the moon's pale glow,
He seeming darker for that light to grow.

XXXIV.

Why follow here that grim old chronicle
Which counts the dagger-strokes and drops of blood?
Enough that Margaret by his mad steel fell,
Unmoved by murder from her trusting mood,
Smiling on him as Heaven smiles on Hell.
With a sad love, remembering when he stood
Not fallen yet, the unsealer of her heart,
Of all her holy dreams the holiest part.

XXXV.

His crime complete, scarce knowing what he did,
(So goes the tale,) beneath the altar there
In the high church the stiffening corpse he hid,
And then, to 'scape that suffocating air,
Like a scared ghoul out of the porch he slid;
But his strained eyes saw bloodspots everywhere,
And ghastly faces thrust themselves between
His soul and hopes of peace with blasting mien.

XXXVI.

His heart went out within him, like a spark
Dropt in the sea; wherever he made bold
To turn his eyes, he saw, all stiff and stark,
Pale Margaret lying dead; the lavished gold
Of her loose hair seemed in the cloudy dark



"ENOUGH THAT MARGARET BY HIS MAD STEEL FELL."

To spread a glory, and a thousandfold
 More strangely pale and beautiful she grew :
 Her silence stabbed his conscience through and through :

XXXVII.

Or visions of past days,—a mother's eyes
 That smiled down on the fair boy at her knee,
 Whose happy upturned face to hers replies,—
 He saw sometimes ; or Margaret mournfully
 Gazed on him full of doubt, as one who tries
 To crush belief that does love injury ;
 Then she would wring her hands, but soon again
 Love's patience glimmered out through cloudy pain.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile he dared not go and steal away
 The silent, dead-cold witness of his sin ;
 He had not feared the life, but that dull clay,
 Those open eyes that showed the death within,
 Would surely stare him mad ; yet all the day
 A dreadful impulse, whence his will could win
 No refuge, made him linger in the aisle,
 Freezing with his wan look each greeting smile.

XXXIX.

Now, on the second day, there was to be
 A festival in church : from far and near
 Came flocking in the sun-burnt peasantry,
 And knights and dames with stately antique cheer,
 Blazing with pomp, as if all faërie
 Had emptied her quaint halls, or as it were,
 The illuminated marge of some old book,
 While we were gazing, life and motion took.

XL.

When all were entered, and the roving eyes
 Of all were staid, some upon faces bright,
 Some on the priests, some on the traceries
 That decked the slumber of a marble knight,
 And all the rustlings over that arise
 From recognizing tokens of delight,
 When friendly glances meet,—then silent ease
 Spread o'er the multitude by slow degrees.

XLI.

Then swelled the organ : up through choir and nave
 The music trembled with an inward thrill

Of bliss at its own grandeur : wave on wave
 Its flood of mellow thunder rose, until
 The hushed air shivered with the throb it gave,
 Then, poising for a moment, it stood still,
 And sank and rose again, to burst in spray
 That wandered into silence far away.

XLII.

Like to a mighty heart the music seemed,
 That yearns with melodies it cannot speak,
 Until, in grand despair of what it dreamed,
 In the agony of effort it doth break,
 Yet triumphs breaking ; on it rushed and streamed
 And wantoned in its might, as when a lake,
 Long pent among the mountains, bursts its walls
 And in one crowding gush leaps forth and falls.

XLIII.

Deeper and deeper shudders shook the air,
 As the huge bass kept gathering heavily,
 Like thunder when it rouses in its lair,
 And with its hoarse growl shakes the low-hung sky :
 It grew up like a darkness everywhere,
 Filling the vast cathedral ; suddenly,
 From the dense mass a boy's clear treble broke
 Like lightning, and the full-toned choir awoke.

XLIV

Through gorgeous windows shone the sun aslant,
 Brimming the church with gold and purple mist,
 Meet atmosphere to bosom that rich chant,
 Where fifty voices in one strand did twist
 Their varicolored tones, and left no want
 To the delighted soul, which sank abyssed
 In the warm music-cloud, while, far below,
 The organ heaved its surges to and fro.

XLV.

As if a lark should suddenly drop dead
 While the blue air yet trembled with its song,
 So snapped at once that music's golden thread,
 Struck by a nameless fear that leapt along
 From heart to heart, and like a shadow spread
 With instantaneous shiver through the throng,
 So that some glanced behind, as half aware
 A hideous shape of dread were standing there.



"FROM THE DENSE MASS A BOY'S CLEAR TREBLE BROKE."

XLVI.

As, when a crowd of pale men gather round,
 Watching an eddy in the leaden deep,
 From which they deem the body of one drowned
 Will be cast forth, from face to face doth creep
 An eager dread that holds all tongues fast bound,
 Until the horror, with a ghastly leap
 Starts up, its dead blue arms stretched aimlessly,
 Heaved with the swinging of the careless sea,—

XLVII.

So in the faces of all these there grew,
 As by one impulse, a dark, freezing awe,
 Which, with a fearful fascination drew
 All eyes toward the altar; damp and raw
 The air grew suddenly, and no man knew
 Whether perchance his silent neighbor saw
 The dreadful thing, which all were sure would rise
 To scare the strained lids wider from their eyes.

XLVIII.

The incense trembled as it upward sent
 Its slow, uncertain thread of wandering blue,
 As 't were the only living element
 In all the church, so deep the stillness grew;
 It seemed one might have heard it, as it went,
 Give out an audible rustle, curling through
 The midnight silence of that awe-struck air,
 More hushed than death, though so much life was there.

XLIX.

Nothing they saw, but a low voice was heard
 Threading the ominous silence of that fear,
 Gentle and terrorless as if a bird,
 Wakened by some volcano's glare, should cheer
 The murk air with his song; yet every word
 In the cathedral's farthest arch seemed near,
 As if it spoke to every one apart,
 Like the clear voice of conscience in each heart.

L.

Rest, to weary hearts thou art most dear!
 O Silence, after life's bewildering din,
 Thou art most welcome, whether in the sear
 Days of our age thou comest, or we win
 Thy poppy-wreath in youth! then wherefore here

Linger I yet, once free to enter in
At that wished gate which gentle Death doth ope,
Into the boundless realm of Strength and Hope ?

LI.

“ The realm of Hope it seems, amid the lack
Of Hope’s entire fulfilment in the clay ;

Beyond our cloud-horizon
the soul’s track
Seems clear and happy
into endless day ;
But, when we enter on it,
we look back,
Earth grows the fairer
as ’t is far away,
The horizon moves before
us as we go,
And where the soul is
there is food for woe.

LII.

“ The clay falls from us,
but the spirit still
Is all unchanged, save
in its destined rise
To higher beauty, which
upon its will
Depends, as here : not
instantly allwise
And good we grow, nor
gifted with the skill
Wrong to discern from
right with undazed
eyes :
Still round us, only wider
the stern ring
Of darkness gathers,
never vanishing.

LIII.

“ Think not in death my love could ever cease :
If thou wast false, more need there is for me
Still to be true ; that slumber were not peace,
If ’t were unvisited with dreams of thee :
And thou hadst never heard such words as these,
Save that in heaven I must ever be



THE INCENSE TREMBLED AS IT UPWARD SENT."

Most comfortless and wretched, seeing this
Our unbaptized babe shut out from bliss.

LIV.

“ This little spirit with imploring eyes
Wanders alone the dreary wild of space;
The shadow of his pain for ever lies
Upon my soul in this new dwelling-place;
His loneliness makes me in Paradise
More lonely, and, unless I see his face,
Even here for grief could I lie down and die,
Save for my curse of immortality.

LV.

“ World after world he sees around him swim
Crowded with happy souls, that take no heed
Of the sad eyes that from the night's faint rim
Gaze sick with longing on them as they speed
With golden gates, that only shut out him;
And shapes sometimes from Hell's abysses freed
Flap darkly by him, with enormous sweep
Of wings that roughen wide the pitchy deep.

LVI.

“ I am a mother,—spirits do not shake
This much of earth from them,—and I must pine
Till I can feel his little hands and take
His weary head upon this heart of mine;
And, might it be, full gladly for his sake
Would I this solitude of bliss resign,
And be shut out of Heaven to dwell with him
Forever in that silence drear and dim.

LVII.

“ I strove to hush my soul, and would not speak
At first, for thy dear sake; a woman's love
Is mighty, but a mother's heart is weak,
And by its weakness overcomes; I strove
To smother bitter thoughts with patience meek,
But still in the abyss my soul would rove,
Seeking my child, and drove me here to claim
The rite that gives him peace in Christ's dear name

LVIII.

“ I sit and weep while blessed spirits sing;
I can but long and pine the while they praise,

And, leaning o'er the wall of Heaven, I fling
 My voice to where I deem my infant strays,
 Like a robbed bird that cries in vain to bring
 Her nestlings back beneath her wings' embrace :
 But still he answers not, and I but know
 That Heaven and earth are both alike in woe.

LIX.

" And thou, dear Mordred, after penance done,
 By Blessed Mary's grace may'st meet me here,
 For she it was that pitied my sad moan,
 Herself not free from mother's pangs whilere,
 And gave me leave to wander forth alone
 To ask due rites for him I held so dear :
 When Holy Church shall grant his soul release,
 I shall possess my heart and be at peace.

LX.

" Yes, ages hence, in joy we yet may meet,
 By sorrow thou, and I by patience tried ;
 No steep is hard for love's white feet to climb,
 And faith is but ambition purified,
 And hope and memory would still be sweet,
 Though every other joy were quite denied ;
 So let us look toward our gleam of light,
 Although between lie leagues of barren night."

LXI.

Then the pale priests, with ceremony due,
 Baptized the child within its dreadful tomb
 Beneath that mother's heart, whose instinct true
 Star-like had battled down the triple gloom
 Of sorrow, love, and death : young maidens, too,
 Strewed the pale corpse with many a milkwhite bloom
 And parted the bright hair, and on the breast
 Crossed the unconscious hands in sign of rest.

LXII.

Some said, that, when the priest had sprinkled o'er
 The consecrated drops, they seemed to hear
 A sigh, as of some heart from travail sore
 Released, and then two voices singing clear,
Misereatur Deus, more and more
 Fading far upward, and their ghastly fear
 Fell from them with that sound, as bodies fall
 From souls upspringing to celestial hall.



"WHEN THE PRIEST HAD SPRINKLED O'ER THE CONSEC-
CRATED DROPS."

LXIII.

And Mordred seemed to hear it and to grow
 Lighter at heart, and they who marked him said,
 That something of the darkness of his woe
 Had from his stony eyes and visage fled,
 Which glimmered now with a strange inward glow,
 As when the sun, with tempest-rack o'erspread,
 Bursts through a sidelong rift, and on his scalp
 Goldens afar some huge cloud-built Alp.

LXIV.

But when they sought him he was stark and cold,
 The loathing spirit had spurned off the clay
 That to such crime had made it overbold :
 Upon his breast a little blossom lay
 Of amaranth, such as grows not in earth's mould ;
 Whence it had come or how could no man say,
 But, after years had passed, it only showed
 The fresher, and its gold more deeply glowed.

ALLEGRA.

I WOULD more natures were like thine,
 That never casts a glance before,—
 Thou Hebe, who thy heart's bright wine
 So lavishly to all dost pour,
 That we who drink forget to pine,
 And can but dream of bliss in store.

Thou canst not see a shade in life ;
 With sunward instinct thou dost rise,
 And, leaving clouds below at strife,
 Gazest undazzled at the skies,
 With all their blazing splendors rife,
 A songful lark with eagle's eyes.

Thou wast some foundling whom the Hours
 Nursed, laughing, with the milk of Mirth ;
 Some influence more gay than ours
 Hath ruled thy nature from its birth.
 As if thy natal-stars were flowers
 That shook their seeds round thee on earth.

And thou, to lull thine infant rest,
 Wast cradled like an Indian child ;

All pleasant winds from south and west
 With lullabies thine ears beguiled,
 Rocking thee in thine oriole's nest,
 Till nature looked at thee and smiled.

Thine every fancy seems to borrow
 A sunlight from thy childish years,
 Making a golden cloud of sorrow,
 A hope-lit rainbow out of tears,—
 Thy heart is certain of to-morrow,
 Though 'yond to-day it never peers.

I would more natures were like thine,
 So innocently wild and free,
 Whose sad thoughts, even, leap and shine,
 Like sunny wavelets in the sea,
 Making us mindless of the brine
 In gazing on the brilliancy.

THE FOUNTAIN.

INTO the sunshine,
 Full of the light,
 Leaping and flashing
 From morn till night!

Into the moonlight,
 Whiter than snow,
 Waving so flower-like
 When the winds blow!

Into the starlight
 Rushing in spray,
 Happy at midnight,
 Happy by day!

Ever in motion,
 Blithesome and cheery,
 Still climbing heavenward.
 Never weary;—

Glad of all weathers,
 Still seeming best,
 Upward or downward,
 Motion thy rest;—



"INTO THE SUNSHINE, FULL
 OF THE LIGHT."

The Shepherd of King Admetus.

Full of a nature
Nothing can tame,
Changed every moment,
Ever the same ;—

Ceaseless aspiring,
Ceaseless content,
Darkness or sunshine
Thy element ;—

Glorious fountain !
Let my heart be
Fresh, changeful, constant,
Upward, like thee !

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

He made a lyre, and drew therefrom
Music so strange and rich,
That all men loved to hear,—and some
Muttered of fagots for a witch.

But King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine,
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine :

And so, well-pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough
And yet he used them so,
That what in other mouths were rough
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
In whom no good they saw ;

And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For, long hour after hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use,
For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But, when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their firstborn brother as a god.

1842.

THE TOKEN.

It is a mere wild rosebud,
Quite fallow now, and dry,
Yet there's something wondrous in it,—
Some gleams of days gone by,—
Dear sights and sounds that are to me
The fingerposts of memory,
And stir my heart's blood far below
Its short-lived waves of joy and woe.

Lips must fade and roses wither,
All sweet times be o'er,—
They only smile, and, murmuring "Thither!"
Stay with us no more:



"HE SAT AND WATCHED THE DEAD LEAVES FALL."

And yet oft-times a look or smile,
 Forgotten in a kiss's while,
 Years after from the dark will start,
 And flash across the trembling heart.

Thou hast given me many roses,
 But never one, like this,
 O'erfloods both sense and spirit
 With such a deep, wild bliss;—
 We must have instincts that glean up
 Sparse drops of this life in the cup,
 Whose taste shall give us all that we
 Can prove of immortality.

Earth's stablest things are shadows,
 And, in the life to come,
 Haply some chance-saved trifle
 May tell of this old home:
 As now sometimes we seem to find,
 In a dark crevice of the mind,
 Some relic, which, long pondered o'er,
 Hints faintly at a life before.



There is a light in thy blue eyes,
 Like an eternal morn,
 A glorious freshness of the skies,
 That dulls not, nor is worn,
 Though all earth's flitting shadows try
 Its sunny immortality.

From thee I learn all gentleness,
 From thee I learn all truth;

And from thy brimming heart's excess,
 My spirit garners youth,
 Gleaning, in harvest-hours like this.
 Ripe winter-stores of golden bliss.

O, happy soul! O, happy heart!
 O, happy dreams of mine!
 That thus can linger all apart
 Within so charmed a shrine.
 While the old weary earth turns round
 With all its strife of empty sound!

1841.

LOVE.

True love is but an humble, low-born thing,
 And hath its food served up in earthen ware;
 It is a thing to walk with, hand in hand,
 Through the every-dayness of this work-day world,
 Baring its tender feet to every roughness,
 Yet letting not one heart-beat go astray
 From Beauty's law of plainness and content;
 A simple, fire-side thing, whose quiet smile
 Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home;
 Which, when our autumn cometh, as it must,
 And life in the chill wind shivers bare and leafless,
 Shall still be blest with Indian-summer youth
 In bleak November, and, with thankful heart,
 Smile on its ample stores of garnered fruit,
 As full of sunshine to our aged eyes
 As when it nursed the blossoms of our spring.
 Such is true Love, which steals into the heart
 With feet as silent as the lightsome dawn
 That kisses smooth the rough brows of the dark,
 And hath its will through blissful gentleness,—
 Not like a rocket, which, with savage glare,
 Whirrs suddenly up, then bursts, and leaves the night
 Painfully quivering on the dazed eyes;
 A love that gives and takes, that seeth faults,
 Not with flaw-seeking eyes like needle-points,
 But, loving kindly, ever looks them down
 With the o'ercoming faith of meek forgiveness;
 A love that shall be new and fresh each hour,
 As is the golden mystery of sunset,

Or the sweet coming of the evening-star,
 Alike, and yet most unlike, every day,
 And seeming ever best and fairest *now*;
 A love that doth not kneel for what it seeks,
 But faces Truth and Beauty as their peer,
 Showing its worthiness of noble thoughts
 By a clear sense of inward nobleness;
 A love that in its object findeth not
 All grace and beauty, and enough to sate
 Its thirst of blessing, but, in all of good
 Found there, it sees but Heaven-granted types
 Of good and beauty in the soul of man,
 And traces, in the simplest heart that beats,
 A family-likeness to its chosen one,
 That claims of it the rights of brotherhood.
 For Love is blind but with the fleshly eye,
 That so its inner sight may be more clear;
 And outward shows of beauty only so
 Are needful at the first, as is a hand
 To guide and to uphold an infant's steps:
 Great spirits need them not; their earnest look
 Pierces the body's mask of thin disguise,
 And beauty ever is to them revealed,
 Behind the unshapeliest, meanest lump of clay,
 With arms outstretched and eager face ablaze,
 Yearning to be but understood and loved.

1840.

TO PERDITA, SINGING.

Thy voice is like a fountain,
 Leaping up in clear moonshine:
 Silver, silver, ever mounting,
 Ever sinking,
 Without thinking,
 To that brimful heart of thine.

Every sad and happy feeling,
 Thou hast had in bygone years,
 Through thy lips comes stealing, stealing,
 Clear and low;
 All thy smiles and all thy tears
 In thy voice awaken,
 And sweetness, wove of joy and woe,

To Perdita, Singing.

From their teaching it hath taken :
 Feeling and music move together,
 Like a swan and shadow, ever
 Heaving on a sky-blue river
 In a day of cloudless weather.

It hath caught a touch of sadness,
 Yet it is not sad ;
 It hath tones of clearest gladness,
 Yet it is not glad ;
 A dim, sweet twilight voice it is,
 Where to-day's accustomed blue
 Is over-grayed with memories,
 With starry feelings quivered through.

Thy voice is like a fountain
 Leaping up in sunshine bright,
 And I never weary counting
 Its clear droppings, lone and single,
 Or when in one full gush they mingle,
 Shooting in melodious light.

Thine is music such as yields
 Feelings of old brooks and fields,
 And, around this pent-up room,
 Sheds a woodland, free perfume ;
 O, thus for ever sing to me !
 O, thus forever !

The green, bright grass of childhood bring to me,
 Flowing like an emerald river,
 And the bright-blue skies above !
 O, sing them back, as fresh as ever,
 Into the bosom of my love,—
 The sunshine and the merriment,
 The unsought, evergreen content,
 Of that never cold time,
 The joy, that, like a clear breeze, went
 Through and through the old time !

Peace sits within thine eyes.
 With white hands crossed in joyful rest,
 While, through thy lips and face, arise
 The melodies from out thy breast ;
 She sits and sings,
 With folded wings
 And white arms crost,



‘THINE IS MUSIC SUCH AS YIELDS FEELINGS OF OLD BROOKS AND FIELDS.’

The Forlorn.

" Weep not for passed things,
 They are not lost :
 The beauty which the summer time
 O'er thine opening spirit shed
 The forest oracles sublime
 That filled thy soul with joyous dread,
 The scent of every smallest flower
 That made thy heart sweet for an hour.—
 Yea, every holy influence,
 Flowing to thee, thou knewest not whence,
 In thine eyes to-day is seen,
 Fresh as it hath ever been ;
 Promptings of Nature, beckonings sweet,
 Whatever led thy childish feet,
 Still will linger unawares
 The guiders of thy silver hairs ;
 Every look and every word
 Which thou givest forth to-day,
 Tell of the singing of the bird
 Whose music stilled thy boyish play."

Thy voice is like a fountain,
 Twinkling up in sharp starlight,
 When the moon behind the mountain
 Dims the low East with faintest white,
 Ever darkling,
 Ever sparkling,
 We know not if 't is dark or bright ;
 But, when the great moon hath rolled round,
 And, sudden-slow, its solemn power
 Grows from behind its black, clear-edged bound,
 No spot of dark the fountain keepeth,
 But, swift, as opening eyelids, leapeth
 Into a waving silver flower.

1841

THE FORLORN.

THE night is dark, the stinging sleet,
 Swept by the bitter gusts of air,
 Drives whistling down the lonely street,
 And stiffens on the pavement bare.

The street-lamps flare and struggle dim
 Through the white sleet-clouds as they pass,

Or, governed by a boisterous whim,
Drop down and rattle on the glass.

One poor, heart-broken, outcast girl
Faces the east-wind's searching flaws,
And, as about her heart they whirl,
Her tattered cloak more tightly draws.

The flat brick walls look cold and bleak,
Her bare feet to the sidewalk freeze;
Yet dares she not a shelter seek,
Though faint with hunger and disease.

The sharp storm cuts her forehead bare,
And, piercing through her garments thin,
Beats on her shrunken breast, and there
Makes colder the cold heart within.

She lingers where a ruddy glow
Streams outward through an open shutter,
Giving more bitterness to woe,
More loneliness to desertion utter.

One half the cold she had not felt,
Until she saw this gush of light
Spread warmly forth, and seem to melt
Its slow way through the deadening night.

She hears a woman's voice within,
Singing sweet words her childhood knew,
And years of misery and sin
Furl off and leave her heaven blue.

Her freezing heart, like one who sinks
Outwearied in the drifting snow,
Drowns to deadly sleep, and thinks
No longer of its hopeless woe:

Old fields, and clear blue summer days,
Old meadows, green with grass and trees,
That shimmer through the trembling haze
And whiten in the western breeze,—

Old faces,—all the friendly past
Rises within her heart again,

The Forlorn.

And sunshine from her childhood cast
Makes summer of the icy rain.

Enhaloed by a mild, warm glow,
From all humanity apart,
She hears old footsteps wandering slow
Through the lone chambers of her heart.

Outside the porch before the door,
Her cheek upon the cold, hard stone
She lies, no longer foul and poor,
No longer dreary and alone.

Next morning, something heavily
Against the opening door did weigh,
And there, from sin and sorrow free,
A woman on the threshold lay.



"A WOMAN ON THE THRESHOLD LAY."

A smile upon the wan lips told
That she had found a calm release,
And that, from out the want and cold,
The song had borne her soul in peace.

For, whom the heart of Man shuts out,
Straightway the heart of God takes in,
And fences them all round about
With silence mid the world's loud din;

And one of his great charities
Is Music, and it doth not scorn

To close the lids upon the eyes
Of the polluted and forlorn ;

Far was she from her childhood's home,
Farther in guilt had wandered thence,
Yet thither it had bid her come
To die in maiden innocence.

1842.

SONG.

O MOONLIGHT deep and tender,
A year and more agoe,
Your mist of golden splendor
Round my betrothal shone !

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,
The very same ye seem,
The low wind trembles through ye,
Ye murmur in my dream !

O river, dim with distance,
Flow thus forever by,
A part of my existence
Within your heart doth lie !

O stars, ye saw our meeting,
Two beings and one soul,
Two hearts so madly beating
To mingle and be whole !

O happy night, deliver
Her kisses back to me,
Or keep them all, and give her
A blissful dream of me !

1842.

MIDNIGHT.

THE moon shines white and silent
On the mist, which, like a tide
Of some enchanted ocean,
O'er the wide marsh doth glide,



"THE FIREFLIES O'ER THE MEADOW IN PULSES COME AND GO."

Spreading its ghost-like billows
Silently far and wide.

A vague and starry magic
Makes all things mysteries,
And lures the earth's dumb spirit
Up to the longing skies,—
I seem to hear dim whispers,
And tremulous replies.

The fireflies o'er the meadow
In pulses come and go;
The elm-trees' heavy shadow
Weighs on the grass below;
And faintly from the distance
The dreaming cock doth crow.

All things look strange and mystic,
The very bushes swell
And take wild shapes and motions,
As if beneath a spell,—
They seem not the same lilacs
From childhood known so well.

The snow of deepest silence
O'er everything doth fall,
So beautiful and quiet,
And yet so like a pall,

As if all life were ended,
And rest were come to all,

O, wild and wondrous midnight,
There is a might in thee
To make the charmed body
Almost like spirit be,
And give it some faint glimpses
Of immortality!

1842.

APPLEDORE.

How looks Appledore in a storm ?
I have seen it when its crags seemed frantic,
Butting against the maddened Atlantic,
When surge after surge would heap enorme,
Cliffs of Emerald topped with snow,
That lifted and lifted and then let go
A great white avalanche of thunder,
A grinding, blinding, deafening ire
Monadnock might have trembled under ;
And the island, whose rock-roots pierced below
To where they are warmed with the central fire,
You could feel its granite fibres racked,
As it seemed to plunge with a shudder and thrill
Right at the breast of the swooping hill.
And to rise again, snorting a cataract
Of rage-froth from every cranny and ledge,
While the sea drew its breath in hoarse and deep,
And the next vast breaker curled its edge,
Gathering itself for a mighty leap.
North, east, and south there are reefs and breakers,
You would never dream of in smooth weather,
That toss and gore the sea for acres,
Bellowing and gnashing and snarling together ;
Look northward, where Duck Island lies,
And over its crown you will see arise,
Against a background of slaty skies,
A row of pillars still and white
That glimmer and then are out of sight,
As if the moon should suddenly kiss,
While you cross the gusty desert by night,
The long colonnades of Persepolis,
And then as sudden a darkness would follow

To gulp the whole scene at a single swallow,
 The city's ghost, the drear brown waste,
 And the string of camels, clumsy-paced :—
 Look southward for White Island light,
 The lantern stands ninety feet o'er the tide ;
 There is first a half-mile of tumult and fight,
 Of dash and roar and tumble and fright,
 And surging bewilderment wild and wide,
 Where the breakers struggle left and right,
 Then a mile or more of rushing sea,
 And then the light-house slim and lone ;
 And whenever the whole weight of ocean is thrown

Full and fair on White
 Island head,
 A great mist-jotun you
 will see
 Lifting himself up silently
 High and huge o'er the
 light-house top,
 With hands of wavering spray
 outspread,
 Groping after the little tower,
 That seems to shrink, and
 shorten, and cower,
 Till the monster's arms of a
 sudden drop,
 And silently and fruitlessly
 He sinks again into the sea.

You, meanwhile, where
 drenched you stand,
 Awaken once more to the
 rush and roar
 And on the rock-point tighten
 your hand,
 As you turn and see a valley
 deep,

That was not there a moment before,
 Suck rattling down between you and a heap
 Of toppling billow, whose instant fall
 Must sink the whole island once for all—
 Or watch the silenter, stealthier seas
 Feeling their way to you more and more ;
 If they once should clutch you high as the knees
 They would whirl you down like a sprig of kelp,



"HIGH AND HUGE O'ER THE LIGHT-HOUSE
 TOP, WITH HANDS OF WAVERING
 SPRAY OUTSPREAD."

Beyond all reach of hope or help;—
And such in a storm is Appledore.

TO THE DANDELION.

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmleß gold,

First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,

Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth—thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder Summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,

Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,

Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks

a warmer clime;
The eyes thou
givest me
Are in the heart and
heed not space
or time:
Not in mid June the
golden-cuirassed
bee

Feels a more Summer-
like, warm ravish-
ment

In the white lily's
breezy tent,
His conquered Sybaris,
than I, when first



"OF MEADOWS WHERE IN SUN THE CATTLE GRAZE."

From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows in the grass,—
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,

Where as the breezes pass,
 The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,—
 Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
 Or whiten in the wind,—of waters blue
 That from the distance sparkle through
 Some woodland gap,—and of a sky above
 Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee
 The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,

Who from the dark old tree
 Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
 And I, secure in childish piety,
 Listened as if I heard an angel sing

With news from Heaven, which he did bring
 Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
 When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
 When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!

Thou teachest me to deem
 More sacredly of every human heart,
 Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
 Of Heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,

Did we but pay the love we owe,
 And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
 On all these living pages of God's book.

DARA.

WHEN Persia's sceptre trembled in a hand
 Wilted by harem-heats, and all the land

Was hovered over by those vulture ills
 That snuff decaying empire from afar,
 Then with a nature balanced as a star,
 Dara arose, a shepherd of the hills,

He, who had governed fleecy subjects well,
 Made his own village, by the self-same spell,
 Secure and peaceful as a guarded fold,
 Till, gathering strength by slow and wise degrees,
 Under his sway, to neighbor villages
 Order returned, and faith and justice old.

Now, when it fortune'd that a king more wise
 Endued the realm with brain and hands and eyes,

He sought on every side men brave and just,
And having heard the mountain-shepherd's praise,
How he renewed the mould of elder days,
To Dara gave a satrapy in trust.

So Dara shepherded a province wide,
Nor in his viceroy's sceptre took more pride



"'T WAS DONE, AND ONLY A WORN SHEPHERD'S VEST
WAS FOUND WITHIN."

Than in his crook before; but Envy finds
More soil in cities than on mountains bare,
And the frank sun of spirits clear and rare
Breeds poisonous fogs in low and marish minds.

Soon it was whispered at the royal ear
That, though wise Dara's province, year by year,

Like a great sponge, drew wealth and plenty up,
 Yet, when he squeezed it at the king's behest,
 Some golden drops, more rich than all the rest,
 Went to the filling of his private cup.

For proof, they said that wheresoe'er he went
 A chest, beneath whose weight the camel bent,
 Went guarded, and no other eye had seen
 What was therein, save only Dara's own,
 Yet when 't was opened, all his tent was known
 To glow and lighten with heapt jewels' sheen.

The king set forth for Dara's province straight,
 Where, as was fit, outside his city's gate
 The viceroy met him with a stately train;
 And there, with archers circled, close at hand,
 A camel with the chest was seen to stand.
 The king grew red, for thus the guilt was plain.

"Open me now," he cried, "yon treasure-chest!"
 'T was done, and only a worn shepherd's vest
 Was found within; some blushed and hung the head,
 Not Dara; open as the sky's blue roof
 He stood, and "O, my lord, behold the proof
 That I was worthy of my trust!" he said.

"For ruling men, lo! all the charm I had;
 My soul in those coarse vestments ever clad,
 Still to the unstained past kept true and leal,
 Still on these plains could breathe her mountain air,
 And Fortune's heaviest gifts serenely bear,
 Which bend men from the truth, and make them reel.

"To govern wisely I had shown small skill
 Were I not lord of simple Dara still;
 That sceptre kept, I cannot lose my way!"
 Strange dew in royal eyes grew round and bright
 And thrilled the trembling lids; before 't was night
 Two added provinces blessed Dara's sway.

TO J. F. H.

NINE years have slipped like hour-glass sand
 From life's fast-emptying globe away,
 Since last, dear friend, I clasped your hand,
 And lingered on the impoverished land,
 Watching the steamer down the bay.

I held the keepsake which you gave,
 Until the dim smoke-pennon curled
 O'er the vague rim 'tween sky and wave,
 And closed the distance like a grave,
 Leaving me to the outer world;

The old worn world of hurry and heat,
 The young, fresh world of thought and scope;
 While you, where silent surges fleet
 Tow'rd far sky beaches still and sweet,
 Sunk wavering down the ocean-slope.

Come back our ancient walks to tread,
 Old haunts of lost or scattered friends,
 Amid the Muses' factories red,
 Where song, and smoke, and laughter sped
 The nights to proctor-haunted ends.

Our old familiars are not laid,
 Though snapped our wands and sunk our books,
 They beckon not to be gainsaid,
 Where, round broad meads which mowers wade,
 Smooth Charles his steel-blue sickle crooks;

Where, as the cloudbergs eastward blow,
 From glow to gloom the hillside shifts
 Its lakes of rye that surge and flow,
 Its plumps of orchard-trees arow,
 Its snowy white-weed's summer drifts,

Or let us to Nantasket, there
 To wander idly as we list,
 Whether on rocky hillocks bare,
 Sharp cedar-points, like breakers, tear
 The trailing fringes of gray mist,

Or whether, under skies clear-blown,
 The heightening surfs with foamy din,
 Their breeze-caught forelocks backward blown
 Against old Neptune's yellow zone,
 Curl slow, and plunge forever in.

For years thrice three, wise Horace said,
 A poem rare let silence bind;
 And love may ripen in the shade,
 Like ours, for nine long seasons laid
 In crypts and arches of the mind.

That right Falernian friendship old
 Will we, to grace our feast, call up,
 And freely pour the juice of gold,
 That keeps life's pulses warm and bold,
 Till Death shall break the empty cup.

ROSALINE.

THOU look'd'st on me all yesternight,
 Thine eyes were blue, thy hair was bright
 As when we murmured our trothplight
 Beneath the thick stars, Rosaline!
 Thy hair was braided on thy head
 As on the day we two were wed,
 Mine eyes scarce knew if thou wert dead—
 But my shrunk heart knew, Rosaline!

The deathwatch ticked behind the wall,
 The blackness rustled like a pall,
 The moaning wind did rise and fall
 Among the bleak pines, Rosaline!
 My heart beat thickly in mine ears:
 The lids may shut out fleshly fears,
 But still the spirit sees and hears,—
 Its eyes are lidless, Rosaline!

A wildness rushing suddenly,
 A knowing some ill shape is nigh,
 A wish for death, a fear to die—
 Is not this vengeance, Rosaline?
 A loneliness that is not lone,
 A love quite withered up and gone,
 A strong soul trampled from its throne—
 What would'st thou further, Rosaline!

'T is drear such moonless nights as these,
 Strange sounds are out upon the breeze,
 And the leaves shiver in the trees,
 And then thou comest, Rosaline!
 I seem to hear the mourners go,
 With long black garments trailing slow,
 And plumes a-nodding to and fro,
 As once I heard them, Rosaline!

Thy shroud it is all of snowy white,
And, in the middle of the night,
Thou standest moveless and upright,
Gazing upon me, Rosaline!
There is no sorrow in thine eyes,
But evermore that meek surprise—
Oh, God! thy gentle spirit tries
To deem me guiltless, Rosaline!



"AND THEN THOU COMEST, ROSALINE."

Above thy grave the robin sings,
And swarms of bright and happy things
Flit all about with sunlit wings—
But I am cheerless, Rosaline!
The violets on the hillock toss,
The gravestone is o'ergrown with moss,

For nature feels not any loss—
But I am cheerless, Rosaline!

Ah! why wert thou so lowly bred?
Why was my pride galled on to wed
Her who brought lands and gold instead
Of thy heart's treasure, Rosaline!
Why did I fear to let thee stay
To look on me and pass away
Forgivingly, as in its May,
A broken flower, Rosaline!

I thought not, when my dagger strook,
Of thy blue eyes; I could not brook
The past all pleading in one look
Of utter sorrow, Rosaline!
I did not know when thou wast dead:
A blackbird whistling overhead
Thrilled through my brain; I would have fled
But dared not leave thee, Rosaline!

A low, low moan, a light twig stirred
By the upspringing of a bird,
A drip of blood—were all I heard—
Then deathly stillness, Rosaline!
The sun rolled down, and very soon,
Like a great fire, the awful moon
Rose, stained with blood, and then a swoon
Crept chilly o'er me, Rosaline!

The stars came out; and, one by one,
Each angel from his silver throne
Looked down and saw what I had done:
I dared not hide me, Rosaline!
I crouched; I feared thy corpse would cry
Against me to God's quiet sky,
I thought I saw the blue lips try
To utter something, Rosaline!

I waited with a maddened grin
To hear that voice all icy thin
Slide forth and tell my deadly sin
To hell and heaven, Rosaline!
But no voice came, and then it seemed
That if the very corpse had screamed
The sound like sunshine glad had streamed
Through that dark stillness, Rosaline!

Dreams of old quiet glimmered by,
And faces loved in infancy
Came and looked on me mournfully,
Till my heart melted, Rosaline!
I saw my mother's dying bed,
I heard her bless me, and I shed
Cool tears—but lo! the ghastly dead
Stared me to madness, Rosaline!

And then amid the silent night
I screamed with horrible delight,
And in my brain an awful light
Did seem to crackle, Rosaline!
It is my curse! sweet memories
fall

From me like snow—and only all
Of that one night, like cold
worms crawl
My doomed heart over, Rosaline!

Thine eyes are shut: they
never more
Will leap thy gentle words before
To tell the secret o'er and o'er
Thou could'st not smother,
Rosaline!

Thine eyes are shut: they will
not shine
With happy tears, or, through
the vine
That hid thy casement, beam
on mine
Sunful with gladness, Rosaline!

Thy voice I never more shall
hear,
Which in old times did seem
so dear,
That, ere it trembled in mine
ear,

My quick heart heard it, Rosaline!
Would I might die! I were as well,
Ay, better, at my home in hell,
To set for aye a burning spell
'Twixt me and memory, Rosaline!



"I SCREAMED WITH HORRIBLE DELIGHT."

Why wilt thou haunt me with thine eyes,
 Wherein such blessed memories,
 Such pitying forgiveness lies,
 Than hate more bitter, Rosaline!
 Woe 's me! I know that love so high
 As thine, true soul, could never die,
 And with mean clay in churchyard lie—
 Would God it might be so, Rosaline!

SONNET.

IF some small savor creep into my rhyme
 Of the old poets, if some words I use,
 Neglected long, which have the lusty thews
 Of that gold-haired and earnest-hearted time,
 Whose loving joy and sorrow all sublime
 Have given our tongue its starry eminence,—
 It is not pride, God knows, but reverence
 Which hath grown in me since my childhood's prime;
 Wherein I feel that my poor lyre is strung
 With soul-strings like to theirs, and that I have
 No right to muse their holy graves among,
 If I can be a custom-fettered slave,
 And, in mine own true spirit, am not brave
 To speak what rusheth upward to my tongue.

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

We see but half the causes of our deeds,
 Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
 And heedless of the encircling spirit-world
 Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us
 All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.
 From one stage of our being to the next
 We pass unconscious o'er a slender bridge,
 The momentary work of unseen hands,
 Which crumbles down behind us; looking back,
 We see the other shore, the gulf between,
 And, marvelling how we won to where we stand,
 Content ourselves to call the builder Chance.
 We trace the wisdom to the apple's fall,
 Not to the birth-throes of a mighty Truth,
 Which, for ages in blank chaos dumb,
 Yet yearned to be incarnate, and had found

At last a spirit meet to be the womb
From which it might leap forth to bless mankind—
Not to the soul of Newton, ripe with all
The hoarded thoughtfulness of earnest years,
And waiting but one ray of sunlight more
To blossom fully.

But whence came that ray ?

We call our sorrows destiny, but ought
Rather to name our high successes so.
Only the instincts of great souls are Fate,
And have predestined sway: all other things,
Except by leave of us, could never be.
For destiny is but the breath of God
Still moving in us, the last fragment left
Of our unfallen nature, waking oft
Within our thought to beckon us beyond
The narrow circle of the seen and known,
And always tending to a noble end,
As all things must that overrule the soul,
And for a space unseat the helmsman, Will.
The fate of England and of freedom once
Seemed wavering in the heart of one plain man;
One step of his, and the great dial-hand
That marks the destined progress of the world
In the eternal round from wisdom on
To higher wisdom, had been made to pause
A hundred years. That step he did not take—
He knew not why, nor we, but only God—
And lived to make his simple oaken chair
More terrible and grandly beautiful,
More full of majesty, than any throne,
Before or after, of a British king.

Upon the pier stood two stern-visaged men,
Looking to where a little craft lay moored,
Swayed by the lazy current of the Thames,
Which weltered by in muddy listlessness.
Grave men they were, and battlings of fierce thought
Had trampled out all softness from their brows,
And ploughed rough furrows there before their time,
For other crop than such as home bred peace
Sows broadcast in the willing soil of youth.
Care, not of self, but of the common weal,
Had robbed their eyes of youth, and left instead



F. M. ASHE

"UPON THE PIER STOOD TWO STERN-VISAGED MEN."

A look of patient power and iron will,
 And something fiercer, too, that gave broad hint
 Of the plain weapons girded at their sides.
 The younger had an aspect of command—
 Not such as trickles down, a slender stream,
 In the shrunk channel of a great descent—
 But such as lies entowered in heart and head,
 And an arm prompt to do the 'hests of both,
 His was a brow where gold were out of place,
 And yet it seemed right worthy of a crown
 (Though he despised such), were it only made
 Of iron, or some serviceable stuff
 That would have matched his sinewy brown face.
 The elder, although such he hardly seemed
 (Care makes so little of some five short years),
 Bore a clear, honest face, whose rough-hewn strength
 Was mildened by the scholar's wiser heart,
 To sober courage, such as best befits
 The unsullied temper of a well-taught mind,
 Yet so remained that one could plainly guess
 The hushed volcano smouldering underneath.
 He spoke: the other, hearing, kept his gaze
 Still fixed, as on some problem in the sky.

“ O CROMWELL, we are fallen on evil times!
 There was a day when England had wide room
 For honest men as well as foolish kings;
 But now the uneasy stomach of the time
 Turns squeamish at them both. Therefore let us
 Seek out that savage clime where men as yet
 Are free: there sleeps the vessel on the tide,
 Her languid canvas drooping for the wind:
 Give us but that, and what need we fear
 This order of the council? The free waves
 Will not say, No, to please a wayward king,
 Nor will the winds turn traitors at his beck:
 All things are fitly cared for, and the Lord
 Will watch as kindly o'er the Exodus
 Of us his servants now, as in old time.
 We have no cloud or fire, and haply we
 May not pass dryshod through the ocean-stream;
 But, saved or lost, all things are in His hand.”
 So spake he, and meantime the other stood
 With wide, gray eyes still reading the blank air,
 As if upon the sky's blue wall he saw

Some mystic sentence, written by a hand
Such as of old did awe the Assyrian king,
Girt with his satraps in the blazing feast.

“HAMPDEN, a moment since, my purpose was
To fly with thee—for I will call it flight,
Nor flatter it with any smother name—
But something in me bids me not to go;
And I am one, thou knowest, who, unscared
By what the weak deem omens, yet give heed
And reverence due to whatsoe'er my soul
Whispers of warning to the inner ear.
Moreover, as I know that God brings round
His purposes in ways undreamed by us,
And makes the wicked but his instruments
To hasten on their swift and sudden fall,
I see the beauty of his providence
In the King's order; blind, he will not let
His doom part from him, but must bid it stay,
As 't were a cricket, whose enlivening chirp
He loved to hear beneath his very breath.
Why should we fly? Nay, why not rather stay
And rear again our Zion's crumbled walls,
Not as of old the walls of Thebes were built
By minstrel twanging, but, if need should be,
With the more potent music of our swords?
Think'st thou that score of men beyond the sea
Claim more God's care than all of England here?
No: when He moves His arm, it is to aid
Whole peoples, heedless if a few be crushed,
As some are ever when the destiny
Of man takes one stride onward nearer home.
Believe it, 't is the mass of men He loves,
And where there is most sorrow and most want,
Where the high heart of man is trodden down
The most, 'tis not because He hides His face
From them in wrath, as purblind teachers prate.
Not so: there most is He, for there is He
Most needed. Men who seek for Fate abroad
Are not so near His heart as they who dare
Frankly to face her where she faces them,
On their own threshold, where their souls are strong
To grapple with and throw her, as I once,
Being yet a boy, did throw this puny king,
Who now has grown so dotard as to deem

- That he can wrestle with an angry realm
And throw the brawned Antæus of men's rights.
No, Hampden, they have half-way conquered Fate
Who go half-way to meet her—as will I.
Freedom has yet a work for me to do;
So speaks that inward voice which never yet
Spake falsely, when it urged the spirit on
To noble deeds for country and mankind.
And for success, I ask no more than this,—
To bear unflinching witness to the truth.
All true, whole men succeed ; for what is worth
Success's name, unless it be the thought,
The inward surety, to have carried out
A noble purpose to a noble end,
Although it be the gallows or the block ?
“ 'Tis only Falsehood that doth ever need
These outward signs of gain to bolster her.
Be it we prove the weaker with our swords,
Truth only needs to be for once spoke out,
And there's such music in her, such strange rhythm,
As make men's memories her joyous slaves,
And cling around the soul, as the sky clings
Round the mute Earth, forever beautiful,
And, if o'erclouded, only to burst forth
More all-embracingly divine and clear :
Get but the truth once uttered, and 't is like
A star new born, that drops into its place,
And which, once circling in its placid round,
Not all the tumult of the Earth can shake.
- “ What should we do in that small colony
Of pinched fanatics, who would rather choose
Freedom to clip an inch more from their hair
Than the great chance of setting England free ?
Not there, amid the stormy wilderness
Should we learn wisdom ; or, if learned, what room
To put it into act—else worse than naught ?
We learn our souls more, tossing for an hour
Upon this huge and ever vexed sea
Of human thought, where kingdoms go to wreck
Like fragile bubbles yonder in the stream,
Than in a cycle of New England sloth,
Broke only by some petty Indian war,
Or quarrel for a letter, more or less,
In some hard word, which, spelt in either way,

Not their most learned clerks can understand.
New times demand new measures and new men ;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our father's day were best ;
And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.
We cannot bring Utopia at once ;
But better almost be at work in sin
Than in a brute inaction browse and sleep.
No man is born into the world whose work
Is not born with him ; there is always work,
And tools to work withal, for those who will ;
And blessed are the horny hands of toil !
The busy world shoves angrily aside
The man who stands with arms a-kinbo set,
Until occasion tells him what to do ;
And he who waits to have his task marked out,
Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.
Our time is one that calls for earnest deeds,
Reason and Government, like two broad seas,
Yearn for each other with outstretched arms
Across this narrow isthmus of the throne,
And roll their white surf higher every day.
One age moves onward, and the next builds up
Cities and gorgeous palaces, where stood
The rude log huts of those who tamed the wild,
Rearing from out the forests they had felled
The goodly framework of a fairer state :
The builder's trowel and the settler's axe
Are seldom wielded by the self-same hand ;
Ours is the harder task, yet not the less
Shall we receive the blessing for our toil
From the choice spirits of the after-time.
The fields lie wide before us, where to reap
The easy harvest of a deathless name,
Though with no better sickles than our swords.
My soul is not a palace of the past,
Where outworn creeds, like Rome's gray senate quake,
Hearing afar the Vandal's trumpet hoarse,
That shakes old systems with a thunder-fit.
The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for change.
Then let it come : I have no dread of what
Is called for by the instinct of mankind.
Nor think I that God's world will fall apart

Because we tear a parchment more or less.
Truth is eternal, but her effluence,
With endless change, is fitted to the hour ;
Her mirror is turned forward to reflect
The promise of the future, not the past.
He who would win the name of truly great
Must understand his own age and the next,
And make the present ready to fulfill
Its prophecy, and with the future merge
Gently and peacefully, as wave with wave.
The future works out great men's destinies ;
The present is enough for common souls,
Who, never looking forward, are indeed
Mere clay wherein the footprints of their age
Are petrified forever : Better those
Who lead the blind old giant by the hand
From out the pathless desert where he gropes,
And set him onward in his darksome way.
I do not fear to follow out the truth,
Albeit along the precipice's edge.
Let us speak plain : there is more force in names
Than most men dream of ; and a lie may keep
Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk
Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.
Let us call tyrants *tyrants*, and maintain
That only freedom comes by grace of God.
And all that comes not by his grace must fall ;
For men in earnest have no time to waste
In patching fig-leaves for the naked truth.

“ I will have one more grapple with the man
Charles Stuart : whom the boy o'ercame,
The man stands not in awe of. I perchance
Am one raised up by the Almighty arm
To witness some great truth to all the world.
Souls destined to o'erleap the vulgar lot,
And mould the world unto the scheme of God,
Have a foreconsciousness of their high doom,
As men are known to shiver at the heart,
When the cold shadow of some coming ill
Creeps slowly o'er their spirit unawares :
Hath Good less power of prophecy than ill ?
How else could men whom God hath called to sway
Earth's rudder, and to steer the bark of Truth
Beating against the wind toward her port,

Bear all the mean and buzzing grievances,
 The petty martyrdoms wherewith Sin strives
 To weary out the tethered hope of Faith,
 The sneers, the unrecognized look of friends,
 Who worship the dead corpse of old king Custom,
 Where it doth lie in state within the Church,
 Striving to cover up the mighty ocean
 With a man's palm, and make even the truth
 Lie for them, holding up the glass reversed,
 To make the hope of man seem further off ?
 My God ! when I read o'er the bitter lives
 Of men whose eager hearts were quite too great
 To beat beneath the cramped mode of the day,
 And see them mocked at by the world they love,
 Hagglng with prejudice for pennyworths
 Of that reform which their hard toil will make
 The common birthright of the age to come—
 When I see this, spite of my faith in God,
 I marvel how their hearts bear up so long ;
 Nor could they, but from this same prophecy,
 This inward feeling of the glorious end.

“ Deem me not fond ; but in my warmer youth,
 Ere my heart's bloom was soiled and brushed away,
 I had great dreams of mighty things to come ;
 Of conquest ; whether by the sword or pen,
 I knew not ; but some conquest I would have.
 Or else swift death : now, wiser grown in years,
 I find youth's dreams are but the flutterings
 Of those strong wings whereon the soul shall soar
 In after time to win a starry throne ;
 And therefore cherish them, for they were lots
 Which I, a boy, cast in the helm of Fate.
 Nor will I draw them, since a man's right hand,
 A right hand guided by an earnest soul,
 With a true instinct, takes the golden prize
 From out a thousand blanks. What men call luck,
 Is the prerogative of valiant souls,
 The fealty life pays its rightful kings.
 The helm is shaking now, and I will stay
 To pluck my lot forth ; it were sin to flee ! ”
 So they two turned together ; one to die
 Fighting for freedom on the bloody field .
 The other, far more happy, to become
 A name earth wears forever next her heart ;

One of the few that have a right to rank
 With the true Makers; for his spirit wrought
 Order from Chaos; proved that right divine
 Dwelt only in the excellence of Truth;
 And far within old Darkness' hostile lines
 Advanced and pitched the shining tents of Light.
 Nor shall the grateful Muse forget to tell,
 That—not the least among his many claims
 To deathless honor—he was Milton's friend,
 A man not second among those who lived
 To show us that the poet's lyre demands
 An arm of tougher sinew than the sword.



VIOLET! sweet Violet!
 Thine eyes are full of tears;
 Are they wet
 Even yet
 With the thought of other years,
 Or with gladness are they full,
 For the night so beautiful,
 And longing for those far-off spheres?

Loved one of my youth thou wast,
 Of my merry youth,
 And I see,
 Tearfully,
 All the fair and sunny past,
 All its openness and truth,
 Ever fresh and green in thee
 As the moss is in the sea.
 Thy little heart, that hath with love

The Moon.

Grown colored like the sky above,
 On which thou lookest ever,—
 Can it know
 All the woe
 Of hope for what returneth never,
 All the sorrow and the longing
 To these hearts of ours belonging!

Out on it! no foolish pining
 For the sky
 Dims thine eye,
 Or for the stars so calmly shining;
 Like thee let this soul of mine
 Take hue from that wherefor I long,
 Self-stayed and high, serene and strong,
 Not satisfied with hoping—but divine.

Violet! dear Violet!
 Thy blue eyes are only wet
 With joy and love of him who sent thee,
 And for the fulfilling sense
 Of that glad obedience
 Which made thee all which Nature meant thee!

THE MOON.

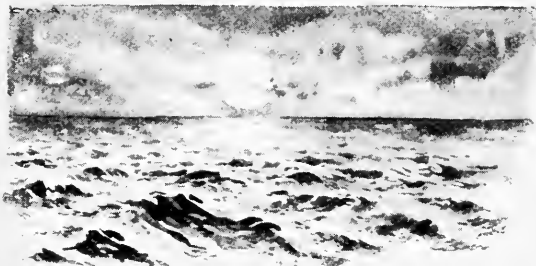
My soul was like the sea
 Before the moon was made;
 Moaning in vague immensity,
 Of its own strength afraid,
 Unrestful and unstaïd.

Through every rift it foamed in vain
 About its earthly prison,
 Seeking some unknown thing in pain,
 And sinking restless back again,
 For yet no moon had risen:
 Its only voice a vast dumb moan
 Of utterless anguish speaking,
 It lay unhopefully alone
 And lived but in an aimless seeking.

So was my soul: but when 't was full
 Of unrest to o'erloading,
 A voice of something beautiful

Whispered a dim foreboding,
 And yet so soft, so sweet, so low,
 It had not more of joy than woe :
 And, as the sea doth oft lie still,
 Making his waters meet,
 As if by an unconscious will,
 For the moon's silver feet,
 So lay my soul within mine eyes
 When thou its guardian moon didst rise.

And now, howe'er its waves above
 May toss and seem uneasyful,
 One strong, eternal law of love
 With guidance sure and peaceful,
 As calm and natural as breath
 Moves its great deeps through Life and Death.



THE FATHERLAND.

WHERE is the true man's fatherland?
 Is it where he by chance is born?
 Doth not the free-winged spirit scorn
 In such scant borders to be spanned?
 Oh yes! his fatherland must be
 As the blue heaven wide and free .

Is it alone where freedom is,
 Where God is God and man is man?
 Doth he not claim a broader span
 For the soul's love of home than this?
 Oh yes! his fatherland must be
 As the blue heaven wide and free !

Where'er a human heart doth wear
 Joy's myrtle wreath, or sorrow's gyves,
 Where'er a human spirit strives
 After a heart more pure and fair,
 There is the true man's birthplace grand!
 His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
 Where'er one man may help another—
 Thank God for such a birthright, brother!
 That spot of earth is thine and mine;
 There is the true man's birthplace grand!
 His is a world-wide fatherland!

A PARABLE.

WORN and footsore was the Prophet
 When he gained the holy hill;
 "God has left the earth," he murmured,
 "Here his presence lingers still.

"God of all the olden prophets,
 Wilt thou speak with men no more?
 Have I not as truly served thee
 As thy chosen ones of yore?

"Hear me, guider of my fathers,
 Lo, a humble heart is mine;
 By thy mercy I beseech thee,
 Grant thy servant but a sign!"

Bowing then his head, he listened
 For an answer to his prayer;
 No loud burst of thunder followed,
 Not a murmur stirred the air:

But the tuft of moss before him
 Opened while he waited yet,
 And from out the rock's hard bosom
 Sprang a tender violet.

"God! I thank thee," said the Prophet,
 "Hard of heart and blind was I,
 Looking to the holy mountain
 For the gift of prophecy.



"RAN TO ME MY LITTLE DAUGHTER, THE BELOVED OF MY HEART."

On the Death of a Friend's Child.

- “ Still thou speakest with thy children
 Freely as in Eld sublime,
 Humbleness and love and patience
 Still give empire over Time.
- “ Had I trusted in my nature,
 And had faith in lowly things,
 Thou thyself wouldst then have sought me,
 And set free my spirit's wings.
- “ But I looked for signs and wonders
 That o'er men should give me sway;
 Thirsting to be more than mortal,
 I was even less than clay.
- “ Ere I entered on my journey,
 As I girt my loins to start,
 Ran to me my little daughter,
 The beloved of my heart;
- “ In her hand she held a flower,
 Like to this as like may be,
 Which beside my very threshold
 She had plucked and brought to me.”

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD.

DEATH never came so nigh to me before,
 Nor showed me his mild face: Oft I had mused
 Of calm and peace and deep forgetfulness,
 Of folded hands, closed eyes, and heart at rest,
 And slumber sound beneath a flowery turf,
 Of faults forgotten, and an inner place
 Kept sacred for us in the heart of friends;
 But these were idle fancies satisfied
 With the mere husk of this great Mystery,
 And dwelling in the outward shows of things.
 Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams,
 Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth
 Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to bloom,
 With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content:
 'T is sorrow builds the shining ladder up
 Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
 Whereupon our firm feet planting, nearer God
 The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed.

True is it that Death's face seems stern and cold,
When he is sent to summon those we love,
But all God's angels come to us disguised;
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks,
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the front of God.
With every anguish of our earthly part
The spirit's sight grows clearer; this was meant
When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay.
Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent
To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.
He flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest—
Only the fallen spirit knocks at that—
But to benigner regions beckons us,
To destinies of more rewarded toil.

In the hushed chamber, sitting by the dead,
It grates on us to hear the flood of life
Whirl rustling onward, senseless of our loss.
The bee hums on; around the blossomed vine
Whirs the light humming-bird; the cricket chirps;
The locust's shrill alarum stings the ear;
Hard by, the cock shouts lustily; from farm to farm,
His cheery brothers, telling of the sun,
Answer, till far away the joyance dies;
We never knew before how God had filled
The summer air with happy living sounds;
All round us seems an overplus of life,
And yet the one dear heart lies cold and still.
It is most strange, when the great Miracle
Hath for our sakes been done; when we have had
Our inwardest experience of God,
When with his presence still the room expands,
And is awed after him, that naught is changed,
That Nature's face looks unacknowledging,
And the mad world still dances heedless on
After its butterflies, and gives no sign.
'T is hard at first to see it all aright;
In vain Faith blows her trump to summon back
Her scattered troop; yet through the clouded glass
Of our own bitter tears, we learn to look
Undazzled on the kindness of God's face;
Earth is too dark, and Heaven alone shines through.

It is no little thing, when a fresh soul
 And a fresh heart, with their unmeasured scope
 For good, not gravitating earthward yet,
 But circling in diviner periods,
 Are sent into the world,—no little thing,
 When this unbounded possibility
 Into the outer silence is withdrawn.
 Ay, in this world, where every guiding thread
 Ends suddenly in the one sure centre, death,
 The visionary hand of might-have-been
 Alone can fill Desire's cup to the brim!



"IN THE HUSHED CHAMBER, SITTING BY THE DEAD."

How changed, dear friend, are thy part and thy child's!
 He bends above *thy* cradle now, or holds
 His warning finger out to be thy guide;
 Thou art the nursling now; he watches thee
 Slow learning, one by one, the secret things
 Which are to him used sights of every day;

He smiles to see thy wondering glances con
The grass and pebbles of the spirit world,
To thee miraculous ; and he will teach
Thy knees their due observances of prayer.

Children are God's apostles, day by day,
Sent forth to preach of love, and hope, and peace ;
Nor hath thy babe his mission left undone.
To me, at least, his going hence hath given
Serener thoughts and nearer to the skies,
And opened a new fountain in my heart
For thee, my friend, and all : and oh, if Death
More near approaches, meditates, and clasps
Even now some dearer, more reluctant hand,
God, strengthen thou my faith, that I may see
That 't is thine angel who, with loving haste,
Unto the service of the inner shrine
Doth waken thy beloved with a kiss !

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. Sept. 3, 1844.

AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR.

HE spoke of Burns : men rude and rough
Pressed round to hear the praise of one
Whose breast was made of manly, simple stuff,
As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned
Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,
His brook-like songs whom glory never weaned
From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,
Sunlike o'er faces brown and hard,
As if in him who read they felt and saw
Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong,
And slavish tyranny to see,
A sight to make our faith more pure and strong
In high Humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence,
Promptings their former life above,



"HE SPOKE OF BURNS: MEN RUDE AND ROUGH PRESSED
ROUND TO HEAR THE PRAISE."

And something of a finer reverence
For beauty, truth, and love.

God scatters love on every side,
Freely among his children all,
And always hearts are lying open wide
Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds
Of a more true and open life,
Which burst unlooked for into high-souled deeds
With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours
Some wild germs of a higher birth,

Which in the poet's tropic heart bears flowers
Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie
These promises of wider bliss,
Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,
In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestic
In life or death since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel heart of man.

And thus among the untaught poor
Great deeds and feelings find a home
That cast in shadow all the golden lore
Of classic Greece or Rome.

Oh! mighty brother-soul of man,
Where'er thou art, in low or high,
Thy skyey arches with exulting span
O'er-roof infinity.

All thoughts that mould the age begin
Deep down within the primitive soul,
And, from the many, slowly upward win
To One who grasps the whole.

In his broad breast, the feeling deep
That struggled on the many's tongue,
Swells to a tide of Thought whose surges leap
O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling—wide
In the great mass its base is hid,
And, narrowing up to thought, stands glorified,
A moveless pyramid.

Nor is he far astray who deems
That every hope which rises and grows broad
In the World's heart, by ordered impulse streams
From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes ; in common souls
Hope is but vague and undefined,

The Fire at Hamburg.

Till from the poet's tongue the message rolls
A blessing to his kind.

Never did poesy appear
So full of Heav'n to me as when
I saw how it would pierce through pride and fear,
To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century.

But better far it is to speak
One simple word which now and then
Shall waken their free nature in the weak
And friendless sons of men;

To write some earnest verse or line
Which, seeking not the praise of Art,
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine
In the uncultured heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,
May be forgotten in his day,
But surely shall be crowned at last with those
Who live and speak for aye.

BOSTON, April, 1842.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG.

The tower of old Saint Nicholas soared upward to
the skies,
Like some huge piece of nature's make, the growth
of centuries;
You could not deem its crowding spires a work of
human art,
They seemed to struggle lightward from a sturdy living
heart.

Not Nature's self more freely speaks in crystal or in
oak
Than, through the pious builder's hand, in that gray
pile she spoke;

And as from acorn springs the oak, so, freely and
alone,
Sprang from his heart this hymn to God, sung in
obedient stone.

It seemed a wondrous freak of chance, so perfect, yet
so rough,
A whim of Nature crystallized slowly in granite tough;
The thick spires yearned towards the sky in quaint
harmonious lines,
And in broad sunlight basked and slept, like a grove
of blasted pines.

Never did rock or stream or tree lay claim with better
right
To all the adorning sympathies of shadow and of
light;
And, in that forest petrified, as forester there dwells
Stout Herman, the old sacristan, sole lord of all its
bells.

Surge leaping after surge, the fire roared onward, red
as blood,
Till half of Hamburg lay engulfed beneath the eddying
flood;
For miles away, the fiery spray poured down its deadly
rain,
And back and forth the billows sucked, and paused,
and burst again.

From square to square, with tiger leaps, rushed on the
lustful fire;
The air to leeward shuddered with the gasps of its
desire;
And church and palace, which even now stood
whelmed but to the knee,
Lift their black roofs like breakers lone amid the
whirling sea.

Up in his tower old Herman sat and watched with
quiet look;
His soul had trusted God too long to be at last
forsook;
He could not fear, for surely God a pathway would
unfold
Through this red sea, for faithful hearts, as once he
did of old.



"UP IN HIS TOWER OLD HERMAN SAT AND WATCHED
WITH QUIET LOOK."

But scarcely call he cross himself, or on his good
 saint call,
 Before the sacrilegious flood o'erleaped the churchyard
 wail,
 And, ere a *pater* half was said, 'mid smoke and
 crackling glare,
 His island tower scarce juts its head above the wide
 despair.

Upon the peril's desperate peak his heart stood up
 sublime;
 His first thought was for God above, his next was for
 his chime;
 "Sing now, and make your voices heard in hymns of
 praise," cried he,
 "As did the Israelites of old, safe-walking through the
 sea!
 "Through this red sea our God hath made our pathway
 safe to shore;
 Our promised land stands full in sight; shout now as
 ne'er before."
 And, as the tower came crashing down, the bells, in
 clear accord,
 Pealed forth the grand old German hymn—"All good
 souls praise the Lord!"

SONNETS.

ON READING WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS IN DEFENCE OF
 CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

I.

As the broad ocean endlessly upheaveth,
 With the majestic beating of his heart,
 The mighty tides, whereof its rightful part
 Each sea-wide bay and little weed receiveth—
 So, through his soul who earnestly believeth
 Life from the universal Heart doth flow,
 Whereby some conquest of the eternal woe
 By instinct of God's nature he achieveth:
 A fuller pulse of this all-powerful Beauty
 Into the poet's gulf-like heart doth tide,
 And he more keenly feels the glorious duty
 Of serving Truth despised and crucified—

Happy, unknowing sect or creed, to rest
And feel God flow forever through his breast.

II.

Once hardly in a cycle blossometh
A flower-like soul ripe with the seeds of song,
A spirit foreordained to cope with wrong,
Whose divine thoughts are natural as breath,
Who the old Darkness thickly scattereth
With starry words that shoot prevailing light
Into the deeps, and wither with the blight
Of serene Truth the coward heart of Death :
Woe if such spirit thwart its errand high,
And mock with lies the longing soul of man !
Yet one age longer must true Culture lie,
Soothing her bitter fetters as she can,
Until new messages of love outstart
At the next beating of the infinite Heart.

III.

The love of all things springs from love of one ;
Wider the soul's horizon hourly grows,
And over it with fuller glory flows
The sky-like spirit of God : a hope begun
In doubt and darkness, 'neath a fairer sun
Cometh to fruitage, if it be of Truth ;
And to the law of meekness, faith and ruth,
By inward sympathy shall all be won :
This thou shouldst know, who from the painted feature
Of shifting Fashion, couldst thy brethren turn
Unto the love of ever youthful nature,
And of a beauty fadeless and eterne ;
And always 't is the saddest sight to see
An old man faithless in Humanity.

IV.

A poet cannot strive for despotism ;
His harp falls shattered ; for it still must be
The instinct of great spirits to be free,
And the sworn foes of cunning barbarism.
He who has deepest searched the wide abysm
Of that life-giving Soul which men call fate,
Knows that to put more faith in lies and hate
Than truth and love, is the true atheism :
Upward the soul forever turns her eyes ;
The next hour always shames the hour before ;

One beauty at its highest prophesies

That by whose side it shall seem mean and poor;
No Godlike thing knows aught of less and less,
But widens to the boundless Perfectness.

V.

Therefore think not the Past is wise alone.

For Yesterday knows nothing of the Best,

And thou shalt love it only as the nest

Whence glory-winged things to Heaven have flown.



"AND OVER IT WITH FULLER GLORY FLOWS."

To the great Soul alone are all things known,

Present and future are to her as past,

While she in glorious madness doth forecast
That perfect bud which seems a flower full-blown
To each new Prophet, and yet always opes

Fuller and fuller with each day and hour,
Heartening the soul with odor of fresh hopes,

And longings high and gushings of wide power;
Yet never is or shall be fully blown
Save in the forethought of the Eternal One.

VI.

Far 'yond this narrow parapet of Time,
 With eyes uplift, the poet's soul should look
 Into the Endless Promise, nor should brook
 One prying doubt to shake his faith sublime,
 To him the earth is ever in her prime
 And dewiness of morning; he can see
 Good lying hid, from all eternity,
 Within the teeming womb of sin and crime,
 His soul shall not be cramped by any bar—
 His nobleness should be so Godlike high
 That his least deed is perfect as a star,
 His common look majestic as the sky,
 And all o'erflooded with a light from far,
 Undimmed by clouds of weak mortality.

BOSTON, April 2, 1842.

HAKON'S LAY.

THEN Thorstein looked at Hakon, where he sate,
 Mute as a cloud amid the stormy hall,
 And said: "O, Skald, sing now an olden song,
 Such as our fathers heard who led great lives;
 And, as the bravest on a shield is born
 Along the waving host that shouts him king,
 So rode their thrones upon the thronging seas!"

Then the old man arose, white-haired he stood,
 White-bearded, and with eyes that looked afar
 From their still region of perpetual snow,
 Over the little smokes and stirs of men:
 His head was bowed with gathered flakes of years,
 As winter bends the sea-foreboding pine,
 But something triumphed in his brow and eye,
 Which whoso saw it, could not see and crouch:
 Loud rang the emptied beakers as he mused,
 Brooding his eyried thoughts; then, as an eagle
 Circles smooth-winged above the wind-vexed wood,
 So wheeled his soul into the air of song
 High o'er the stormy hall; and thus he sang:

"The fletcher for his arrow-shaft picks out
 Wood closest-grained, long-seasoned, straight as light;
 And, from a quiver full of such as these,
 The wary bow-man, matched against his peers,



"AND THUS HE SANG."

Long doubting, singles yet once more the best.
 Who is it that can make such shafts as Fate?
 What archer of his arrows is so choice,
 Or hits the white so surely? They are men,
 The chosen of her quiver; not for her
 Will every reed suffice, or cross-grained stick
 At random from life's vulgar fagot plucked:
 Such answer household ends; but she will have
 Souls straight and clear, of toughest fibre, sound
 Down to the heart of heart; from these she strips
 All needless stuff, all sapwood, hardens them,
 From circumstance untoward feathers plucks
 Crumpled and cheap, and barbs with iron will:
 The hour that passes is her quiver-boy;
 When she draws bow, 'tis not across the wind,
 Nor 'gainst the sun, her haste-snatched arrow sings.
 For sun and wind have plighted faith to her:
 Ere men have heard the sinew twang, behold,
 In the butt's heart her trembling messenger!

“ The song is old and simple that I sing:
 Good were the days of yore, when men were tried
 By ring of shields, as now by ring of gold;
 But while the gods are left, and hearts of men
 And the free ocean, still the days are good;
 Through the broad Earth roams Opportunity
 And knocks at every door of hut or hall,
 Until she finds the brave soul that she wants.”

He ceased, and instantly the frothy tide
 Of interrupted wassail roared along;
 But Leif, the son of Eric sat apart
 Musing, and, with his eyes upon the fire,
 Saw shapes of arrows, lost as soon as seen;
 But then with that resolve his heart was bent,
 Which, like a humming shaft, through many a strife
 Of day and night across the unventured seas,
 Shot the brave prow to cut on Vinland sands
 The first rune in the Saga of the West.

TO THE FUTURE.

O, LAND of Promise ! from what Pisgah's height
 Can I behold that stretch of peaceful bowers ?
 Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,

Thy nestled homes and sun-illumined towers ?
 Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped gold,
 Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,
 Its deeps on deeps of glory that unfold
 Still brightening abysses,
 And blazing precipices,
 Whence but a scanty leap it seems to heaven,
 Sometimes a glimpse is given,
 Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more unstinted blisses.

O, Land of Quiet ! to thy shore the surf
 Of the perturbed Present rolls and sleeps ;
 Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy turf
 And lure out blossoms ; to thy bosom leaps,
 As to a mother's, the o'er-wearied heart,
 Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,
 The hurrying feet, the curses without number
 And, circled with the glow Elysian,
 Of thine exulting vision,
 Out of its very cares woos charms for peace and slumber.

To thee the earth lifts up her fettered hands
 And cries for vengeance ; with a pitying smile
 Thou blessest her, and she forgets her bands,
 And her old woe-worn face a little while
 Grows young and noble ; unto thee the Oppressor
 Looks, and is dumb with awe ;
 The eternal law
 Which makes the crime its own blindfold redresser,
 Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,
 And he can see the grim-eyed Doom
 From out the trembling gloom
 Its silent-footed steeds toward his palace goading.

What promises hast thou for Poets' eyes,
 Aweary of the turmoil and the wrong !
 To all their hopes what over-joyed replies !
 What undreamed ecstasies for blissful song !
 Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling clangor
 Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the poor ;
 The humble glares not on the high with anger ;
 Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed for more ;
 In vain strives Self the godlike sense to smother ;
 From the soul's deeps
 It throbs and leaps ;
 The noble neath foul rags beholds his long-lost brother.

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires
 Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit free ;
 To thee the Poet mid his toil aspires,
 And grief and hunger climb about his knee
 Welcome as children ; thou upholdest
 The lone Inventor by his demon haunted ;
 The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are coldest,
 And, gazing o'er the midnight's bleak abyss,
 Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy kiss,
 And stretch its happy arms and leap up disenchanted.

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving kindly
 The guilty thinks it pity ; taught by thee
 Fierce tyrants drop the scourges wherewith blindly
 Their own souls they were scarring ; conquerors see



"TO THEE THE POET MID HIS TOIL ASPIRES."

With horror in their hands the accursed spear
 That tore the meek One's side on Calvary,
 And from their trophies shrink with ghastly fear ;
 Thou, too, art the Forgiver,
 The beauty of man's soul to man revealing ;
 The arrows from thy quiver
 Pierce error's guilty heart, but only pierce for healing.

O, whither, whither, glory-wingéd dreams,
 From out Life's sweat and turmoil would ye bear me ?

Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden gleams,
 'This agony of hopeless contrast spare me!
 Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my night!
 He is a coward who would borrow
 A charm against the present sorrow
 From the vague Future's promise of delight:
 As life's alarums nearer roll,
 The ancestral buckler calls,
 Self-clanging, from the walls
 In the high temple of the soul;
 Where are most sorrows, there the poet's sphere is,
 To feed the soul with patience,
 To heal its desolations
 With words of unshorn truth, with love that never wearies.

OUT OF DOORS.

'T is good to be abroad in the sun,
 His gifts abide when day is done;
 Each thing in nature from his cup
 Gathers a several virtue up;
 The grace within its being's reach
 Becomes the nutriment of each,
 And the same life imbibed by all
 Makes each most individual:
 Here the twig-bending peaches seek
 The glow that mantles in their cheek—
 Hence comes the Indian-summer bloom
 That hazes round the basking plum,
 And, from the same impartial light,
 The grass sucks green, the lily white.

Like these the soul, for sunshine made,
 Grows wan and gracile in the shade,
 Her faculties, which God decreed
 Various as Summer's dædal breed,
 With one sad color are imbued,
 Shut from the sun that tints their blood;
 The shadow of the poet's roof
 Deadens the dyes of warp and woof;
 Whate'er of ancient song remains
 Has fresh air flowing in its veins,
 For Greece and eldest Ind knew well
 That out of doors, with world-wide swell
 Arches the student's lawful cell.

Away, unfruitful lore of books,
 For whose vain idiom we reject
 The spirit's mother-dialect,
 Aliens among the birds and brooks,
 Dull to interpret or believe
 What gospels lost the woods retrieve,
 Or what the eves-dropping violet
 Reports from God, who walketh yet
 His garden in the hush of eve!
 Away, ye pedants city-bred,
 Unwise of heart, too wise of head,
 Who handcuff Art with *thus and so*,
 And in each other's footprints tread,
 Like those who walk through drifted snow;

Who from deep study of brick walls
 Conjecture of the water-falls,
 By six square feet of smoke-stained sky
 Compute those deeps that overlie
 The still tarn's heaven-anointed eye,
 And, in your earthen crucible,
 With chemic tests essay to spell
 How nature works in field and dell!
 Seek we where Shakespeare buried gold?
 Such hands no charmed witch-hazel hold;
 To beach and rock repeats the sea
 The mystic *Open Sesame*;
 Old Greylock's voices not in vain
 Comment on Milton's mountain strain,
 And cunningly the various wind
 Spenser's locked music can unbind.

A REVERIE.

IN the twilight deep and silent
 Comes thy spirit unto mine,
 When the starlight and the moonlight
 Over cliff and woodland shine.
 And the quiver of the river
 Seems a thrill of joy benign.

Then I rise and go in fancy
 To the headland by the sea,
 When the evening star throbs setting
 Through the dusky cedar-tree,



"WHO, FROM DEEP STUDY OF BRICK WALLS CONJECTURE
OF THE WATER-FALLS."

And from under, low-voiced thunder
From the surf swells fitfully.

Then within my soul I feel thee
Like a gleam of bygone years,
Visions of my childhood murmur
Their old madness in my ears,
Till the pleasance of thy presence
Crowds my heart with blissful tears.

All the wondrous dreams of boyhood—
All youth's fiery thirst of praise—
All the surer hopes of manhood
Blossoming in sadder days—
Joys that bound me, griefs that crowned me
With a better wreath than bays—



"HOME I LOITER THROUGH
THE MOONLIGHT."

All the longings after freedom—
The vague love of human kind,
Wandering far and near at random
Like a dead leaf on the wind—
Rousing only in the lonely
Twilight of an aimless mind,—

All of these, oh best beloved,
Happiest present dreams and past.
In thy love find safe fulfilment,
Ripened into truths at last;
Faith and beauty, hope and duty
To one centre gather fast.

How my spirit, like an ocean,
At the breath of thine awakes,
Leaps its shores in mad exulting
And in foamy music breaks,
Then downsinking, lieth shrinking
At the tumult that it makes!

Blazing Hesperus hath sunken
Low within the pale-blue west,
And with blazing splendor crowneth
The horizon's piny crest;

Thoughtful quiet stills the riot
Of wild longing in my breast.

Home I loiter through the moonlight,
Underneath the quivering trees,

Which, as if a spirit stirred them,
Sway and bend, till by degrees
The far surge's murmur merges
In the rustle of the breeze.

IN SADNESS.

THERE is not in this life of ours
One bliss unmixed with fears;
The hope that wakes our deepest powers
A face of sadness wears,
And the dew that showers our dearest flowers
Is the bitter dew of tears.

Fame waiteth long, and lingereth
Through weary nights and morns—
And evermore the shadow Death
With mocking finger scorns
That underneath the laurel wreath
Should be a wreath of thorns.

The laurel leaves are cool and green,
But the thorns are hot and sharp,
Lean Hunger grins and stares between
The poet and his harp;
Though of Love's sunny sheen his woof have been,
Grim Want thrusts in the warp.

And if beyond this darksome clime
Some fair star Hope may see,
That keeps unjarred the blissful chime
Of its golden infancy—
Where the harvest-time of faith sublime
Not always is to be—

Yet would the true soul rather choose
Its home where sorrow is,
Than in a sated peace to lose
Its life's supremest bliss—
The rainbow hues that bend profuse
O'er cloudy spheres like this—

The want, the sorrow and the pain,
That are Love's right to cure—
The sunshine bursting after rain—

The gladness insecure
That makes us fain strong hearts to gain,
To do and to endure.

High natures must be thunder-scarred
With many a searing wrong;
From mother Sorrow's breasts the bard
Sucks gifts of deepest song,
Nor all unmarred with struggles hard
Wax the Soul's sinews strong.

Dear Patience too, is born of woe,
Patience that opes the gate
Where through the soul of man must go
Up to each nobler state,
Whose voice's flow so meek and low
Smooths the bent brows of Fate.

Though Fame be slow, yet Death is swift,
And, o'er the spirit's eyes,
Life after life doth change and shift
With larger destinies.
As on we drift, some wider rift
Shows us serener skies.

And though naught falleth to us here
But gains the world counts loss,
Though all we hope of wisdom clear
When climbed to seems but dross,
Yet all, though ne'er Christ's faith they wear,
At least may share his cross.

FAREWELL.

FAREWELL! as the bee round the blossom
Doth murmur drowsily,
So murmureth round my bosom
The memory of thee;
Lingering, it seems to go,
When the wind more full doth flow,
Waving the flower to and fro,
But still returneth, Marian!
My hope no longer burneth,
Which did so fiercely burn,
My joy to sorrow turneth,

Although loath, loath to turn—
I would forget—
And yet—and yet
My heart to thee still yearneth, Marian!

Fair as a single star thou shinest,
And white as lilies are
The slender hand wherewith thou twinest
Thy heavy auburn hair;
Thou art to me
A memory
Of all that is divinest:
Thou art so fair and tall,
Thy looks so queenly are,
Thy very shadow on the wall,
Thy step upon the stair,
The thought that thou art nigh,
The chance look of thine eye
Are more to me than all, Marian,
And will be till I die!

As the last quiver of a bell
Doth fade into the air,
With a subsiding swell
That dies we know not where,
So my hope melted and was gone:
I raised mine eyes to bless the star
That shared its light with me so far
Below its silver throne,
And gloom and chilling vacancy
Were all was left to me,
In the dark, bleak night I was alone?
Alone in the blessed Earth, Marian,
For what were all to me—
Its love, and light, and mirth. Marian,
If I were not with thee?

My heart will not forget thee
More than the moaning brine
Forgets the moon when she is set;
The gush when first I met thee
That thrilled my brain like wine,
Doth thrill as madly yet;
My heart cannot forget thee,
Though it may droop and pine,
Too deeply it had set thee



"THY STEP UPON THE STAIR."

In every love of mine;
No new moon ever cometh,
No flower ever bloometh,
No twilight ever gloometh
But I 'm more only thine.
Oh look not on me, Marian,
Thine eyes are wild and deep,
And they have won me, Marian,
From peacefulness and sleep;
The sunlight doth not sun me,
The meek moonshine doth shun me,
All sweetest voices stun me—
There is no rest
Within my breast
And I can only weep, Marian!

As a landbird far at sea
Doth wander through the sleet
And drooping downward wearily
Finds no rest for her feet,
So wandereth my memory
O'er the years when we did meet;
I used to say that everything
Partook a share of thee,
That not a little bird could sing,
Or green leaf flutter on the tree,
That nothing could be beautiful
Save part of thee were there,
That from thy soul so clear and full
All bright and blessed things did cull
The charm to make them fair;
And now I know
That it was so,
Thy spirit through the earth doth flow
And face me whereso'er I go—
What right hath perfectness to give
Such weary weight of wo
Unto the soul which cannot live
On anything more low?
Oh leave me, leave me, Marian,
There 's no fair thing I see
But doth deceive me, Marian,
Into sad dreams of thee!

A cold snake gnaws my heart
And crushes round my brain,

A Dirge.

And I should glory but to part
 So bitterly again,
 Feeling the slow tears start
 And fall in fiery rain;
 There's a wide ring round the moon,
 The ghost-like clouds glide by,
 And I hear the sad winds croon
 A dirge to the lowering sky;
 There 's nothing soft or mild
 In the pale moon's sickly light,
 But all looks strange and wild
 Through the dim, foreboding night;
 I think thou must be dead
 In some dark and lonely place,
 With candles at thy head,
 And a pall above thee spread
 To hide thy dead, cold face;
 But I can see thee underneath
 So pale, and still, and fair,
 Thine eyes closed smoothly and a wreath
 Of flowers in thy hair;
 I never saw thy face so clear
 When thou wast with the living,
 As now beneath the pall, so drear,
 And stiff, and unforgiving;
 I cannot flee thee, Marian,
 I cannot turn away.
 Mine eyes must see thee, Marian,
 Through salt tears night and day.

A DIRGE.

POET! lonely is thy bed,
 And the turf is overhead—
 Cold earth is thy cover;
 But thy heart hath found release,
 And its slumbers full of peace
 'Neath the rustle of green trees
 And the warm hum of the bees,
 'Mid the drowsy clover:
 Through thy chamber, still as death,
 A smooth gurgle wandereth,
 As the blue stream murmureth
 To the blue sky over.

Three paces from the silver strand,
Gently in the fine, white sand,
With a lily in thy hand,

Pale as snow, they laid thee;
In no coarse earth wast thou hid,
And no gloomy coffin-lid

Darkly overweighed thee.
Silently as snow-flakes drift,
The smooth sand did sift and sift

O'er the bed they made thee;
All sweet birds did come and sing

At thy sunny burying—

Choristers unbidden,
And, beloved of sun and dew,
Meek forget-me-nots upgrew
Where thine eyes so large and blue
'Neath the turf were hidden,

Where thy stainless clay doth lie,
Blue and open is the sky,
And the white clouds wander by,
Dreams of summer silently

Darkening the river;
Thou hearest the clear water run;
And the ripples every one,
Scattering the golden sun,

Through thy silence quiver;
Vines trail down upon the stream,
Into its smooth and glassy dream

A green stillness spreading,
And the shiner, perch, and bream
Through the shadowed waters gleam
'Gainst the current heading.



"POET! LONELY IS THY BED, AND
THE TURF IS OVERHEAD."

White as snow, thy winding sheet
Shelters thee from head to feet,

Save thy pale face only;
Thy face is turned toward the skies,
The lids lie meekly o'er thine eyes,
And the low-voiced pine-tree sighs

O'er thy bed so lonely
All thy life thou lov'dst its shade;
Underneath it thou art laid,

In an endless shelter;
Thou hearest it forever sigh
As the wind's vague longings die

A Dirge.

In its branches dim and high—
 Thou hear'st the waters gliding by
 Slumberously welter.

Thou wast full of love and truth
 Of forgivingness and ruth—
 Thy great heart with hope and youth
 Tided to overflowing.
 Thou didst dwell in mysteries,
 And there lingered on thine eyes
 Shadows of serener skies,
 Awfully wild memories,
 That were like foreknowing;
 Through the earth thou would'st have gone,
 Lighted from within alone,
 Seeds from flowers in Heaven grown
 With a free hand sowing.

Thou didst remember well and long
 Some fragments of thine angel-song,
 And strive, through want and wo and wrong,
 To win the world unto it;
 Thy curse it was to see and hear
 Beyond To-day's dim hemisphere—
 Beyond all mists of doubt and fear,
 Into a life more true and clear,
 And dearly thou didst rue it;
 Light of the new world thou hadst won,
 O'erflooded by a purer sun—
 Slowly Fate's ships came drifting on,
 And through the dark, save thou, not one
 Caught of the land a token,
 Thou stood'st upon the farthest prow
 Something within thy soul said "Now!"
 And leaping forth with eager brow,
 Thou fell'st on shore heart-broken.

Long time thy brethren stood in fear;
 Only the breakers far and near,
 White with their anger, they could hear;
 The sounds of land, which thy quick ear
 Caught long ago, they heard not.
 And when at last they reached the strand,
 They found thee lying on the sand
 With some wild flowers in thy hand,
 But thy cold bosom stirred not:



"THEY FOUND THEE LYING ON THE SAND."

They listened, but they heard no sound
Save from the glad life all around

A low, contented murmur,
The long grass flowed adown the hill,
A hum rose from a hidden rill,
But thy glad heart, that knew no ill
But too much love, lay dead and still—
The only thing that sent a chill
Into the heart of summer.

Thou didst not seek the poet's wreath
But too soon didst win it;
Without 'twas green, but underneath
Were scorn and loneliness and death,
Gnawing the brain with burning teeth,
And making mock within it.

Thou, who wast full of nobleness,
Whose very life-blood 't was to bless,
Whose soul's one law was giving,
Must bandy words with wickedness,
Haggle with hunger and distress,
To win that death which worldliness
Calls bitterly a living,

"Thou sow'st no gold, and shalt not reap?"
Muttered earth, turning in her sleep;

"Come home to the Eternal Deep!"
Murmured a voice, and a wide sweep
Of wings through thy soul's hush did creep,
As of thy doom o'erflying;
It seemed that thy strong heart would leap
Out of thy breast, and thou didst weep,
But not with fear of dying;

Men could not fathom thy deep fears,
 They could not understand thy tears,
 The hoarded agony of years
 Of bitter self-denying
 So once, when high above the spheres
 Thy spirit sought its starry peers,
 It came not back to face the jeers
 Of brothers who denied it;
 Star-crowned, thou dost possess the deeps
 Of God, and thy white body sleeps
 Where the lone pine forever keeps
 Patient watch beside it.

Poet ! underneath the turf,
 Soft thou sleepest, free from morrow,
 Thou hast struggled through the surf
 Of wild thoughts and want and sorrow
 Now, beneath the moaning pine,
 Full of rest, thy body lieth,
 While far up in pure sunshine,
 Underneath a sky divine,
 Her loosed wings thy spirit trieth;
 Oft she strove to spread them here,
 But they were too white and clear
 For our dingy atmosphere.

Thy body findeth ample room
 In its still and grassy tomb
 By the silent river;
 But thy spirit found the earth
 Narrow for the mighty birth
 Which it dreamed of ever:
 Thou wast guilty of a rhyme
 Learned in a benigner clime,
 And of that more grievous crime,
 An ideal too sublime
 For the low-hung sky of Time.

The calm spot where thy body lies
 Gladdens thy soul in Paradise,
 It is so still and holy;
 Thy body sleeps serenely there,
 And well for it thy soul may care,
 It was so beautiful and rare,
 Lily white so wholly.

From so pure and sweet a frame
Thy spirit parted as it came,
Gentle as a maiden;
Now it hath its full of rest—
Sods are lighter on its breast
Than the great, prophetic guest
Wherewith it was laden.

FANCIES ABOUT A ROSEBUD.

PRESSED IN AN OLD COPY OF SPENSER

WHO prest you here? The past can tell,
When summer skies were bright above,
And some full heart did leap and swell
Beneath the white new moon of love.

Some Poet, haply, when the
world
Showed like a calm sea,
grand and blue,
Ere its cold, inky waves had
curled
O'er the numb heart once
warm and true;

When, with his soul brimful
of morn,
He looked beyond the vale
of Time,

Nor saw therein the dullard scorn
That made his heavenliness a crime;

When, musing o'er the Poets olden
His soul did like a sun upstart
To shoot its arrows, clear and golden,
Through slavery's cold and darksome heart.

Alas! too soon the veil is lifted
That hangs between the soul and pain,
Too soon the morning-red hath drifted
Into dull cloud, or fallen in rain!

Or were you prest by one who nurst
Bleak memories of love gone by,



"WHO PREST YOU HERE?"

Fancies about a Rosebud.

Whose heart, like a star fallen, burst
In dark and erring vacancy ?

To him you still were fresh and green
As when you grew upon the stalk,
And many a breezy summer scene
Came back—and many a moonlit walk ;

And there would be a hum of bees,
A smell of childhood in the air,
And old, fresh feelings cooled the breeze
That, like loved fingers, stirred his hair !

When would you suddenly be blasted
By the keen wind of one dark thought,
One nameless woe, that had outlasted
The sudden blow whereby 't was brought.

Or were you prest here by two lovers
Who seemed to read these verses rare,
But found between the antique covers
What Spenser could not prison there :

Songs which his glorious soul had heard,
But his dull pen could never write,
Which flew, like some gold-wingèd bird,
Through the blue heaven out of sight ?

My heart is with them as they sit,
I see the rosebud in her breast,
I see her small hand taking it
From out its odorous, snowy nest ;

I hear him swear that he will keep it,
In memory of that blessed day,
To smile on it or over-weep it
When she and spring are far away.

Ah me ! I needs must droop my head,
And brush away a happy tear,
For they are gone, and, dry and dead,
The rosebud lies before me here.

Yet is it in no stranger's hand,
For I will guard it tenderly,

And it shall be a magic wand
To bring mine own true love to me.

My heart runs o'er with sweet surmises,
The while my fancy weaves her rhyme,
Kind hopes and musical surprises
Throng round me from the olden time.



"I SEE HER SMALL HAND TAKING IT FROM OUT ITS
ODOROUS, SNOWY NEST."

I do not care to know who prest you:
Enough for me to feel and know
That some heart's love and longing blest you,
Knitting to-day with long-ago.

New Year's Eve, 1844.

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1844.

A FRAGMENT.

THE night is calm and beautiful; the snow
Sparkles beneath the clear and frosty moon
And the cold stars, as if it took delight
In its own silent whiteness; the hushed earth
Sleeps in the soft arms of the embracing blue,
Secure as if angelic squadrons yet
Encamped about her, and each watching star
Gained double brightness from the flashing arms
Of winged and unsleeping sentinels.
Upward the calm of infinite silence deepens,
The sea that flows between high heaven and earth,
Musing by whose smooth brink we sometimes find
A stray leaf floated from those happier shores,
And hope, perchance not vainly, that some flower,
Which we had watered with our holiest tears,
Pale blooms, and yet our scanty garden's best,
O'er the same ocean piloted by love,
May find a haven at the feet of God,
And be not wholly worthless in his sight,
O, high dependence on a higher Power,
Sole stay for all these restless faculties
That wander, Ishmael-like, the desert bare
Wherein our human knowledge hath its home,
Shifting their light-framed tents from day to day,
With each new-found oasis, wearied soon,
And only of uncertainty!
O, mighty humbleness that feels with awe,
Yet with a vast exulting feels, no less,
That this huge Minster of the Universe,
Whose smallest oratories are glorious worlds,
With painted oriels of dawn and sunset;
Whose carved ornaments are systems grand,
Orion kneeling in his starry niche,
The Lyre whose strings give music audible
To holy ears, and countless splendors more,
Crowned by the blazing Cross high-hung o'er all;
Whose organ music is the solemn stops
Of endless Change breathed through by endless Good:
Whose choristers are all the morning stars;
Whose altar is the sacred human heart
Whereon Love's candles burn unquenchably,
Trimmed day and night by gentle-handed Peace;

With all its arches and its pinnacles
That stretch forever and forever up,
Is founded on the silent heart of God,
Silent, yet pulsing forth exhaustless life
Through the least veins of all created things.
Fit musings these for the departing year;
And God be thanked for such a crystal night
As fills the spirit with good store of thoughts,
That, like a cheering fire of walnut, crackle
Upon the hearthstone of the heart, and cast
A mild home-glow o'er all Humanity!
Yes, though the poisoned shafts of evil doubts
Assail the skyeey panoply of Faith,
Though the great hopes which we have had for man,
Foes in disguise, because they based belief
On man's endeavor, not on God's decree—
Though these proud-visaged hopes, once turned to fly,
Hurl backward many a deadly Parthian dart
That rankles in the soul and makes it sick
With vain regret, nigh verging on despair—
Yet, in such calm and earnest hours as this,
We well can feel how every living heart
That sleeps to-night in palace or in cot,
Or unroofed hovel, or which need hath known
Of other homestead than the arching sky,
Is circled watchfully with seraph fires;
How our own erring will it is that hangs
The flaming sword o'er Eden's unclosed gate,
Which gives free entrance to the pure in heart,
And with its guarding walls doth fence the meek.
Sleep then, O Earth, in thy blue-vaulted cradle,
Bent over always by thy mother Heaven!
We all are tall enough to reach God's hand,
And angels are no taller: looking back
Upon the smooth wake of a year o'er past,
We see the black clouds furling, one by one,
From the advancing majesty of Truth,
And something won for Freedom, whose least gain
Is as a firm and rock-built citadel
Wherefrom to launch fresh battle on her foes;
Or, leaning from the time's extremest prow,
If we gaze forward through the blinding spray,
And dimly see how much of ill remains,
How many fetters to be sawn asunder
By the slow toil of individual zeal,

Or haply rusted by salt tears in twain,
We feel, with something of a sadder heart,
Yet bracing up our bruised mail the while,
And fronting the old foe with fresher spirit,
How great it is to breathe with human breath,
To be but poor foot-soldiers in the ranks
Of our old exiled king, Humanity;
Encamping after every hard-won field
Nearer and nearer Heaven's happy plains.



"WE SEE THE BLACK CLOUDS FURLING, ONE BY ONE."

Many great souls have gone to rest, and sleep
Under this armor, free and full of peace:
If these have left the earth, yet Truth remains,
Endurance, too, the crowning faculty

Of noble minds, and Love, invincible
By any weapons; and these hem us round
With silence such that all the groaning clank
Of this mad engine men have made of earth
Dulls not some ears for catching purer tones,
That wander from the dim surrounding vast,
Or far more clear melodious prophecies,
The natural music of the heart of man,
Which by kind Sorrow's ministry hath learned
That the true sceptre of all power is love,
And humbleness the palace-gate of truth.
What man with soul so blind as sees not here
The first faint tremble of Hope's morning-star,
Foretelling how the God-forged shafts of dawn,
Fitted already on their golden string,
Shall soon leap earthward with exulting flight
To thrid the dark heart of that evil faith
Whose trust is in the clumsy arms of Force,
The ozier hauberk of a ruder age?
Freedom! thou other name for happy Truth,
Thou warrior-maid, whose steel-clad feet were never
Out of the stirrup, nor thy lance uncouched,
Nor thy fierce eye enticed from its watch,
Thou hast learned now, by hero-blood in vain
Poured to enrich the soil which tyrants reap;
By wasted lives of prophets, and of those
Who, by the promise in their souls upheld,
Into the red arms of a fiery death
Went blithely as the golden-girdled bee
Sinks in the sleepy poppy's cup of flame
By the long woes of nations set at war,
That so the swollen torrent of their wrath
May find a vent, else sweeping off like straws
The thousand cobweb threads, grown cable huge
By time's long-gathered dust, but cobwebs still,
Which bind the many that the Few may gain
Leisure to wither by the drought of ease
What heavenly germs in their own souls were sown;—
By all these searching lessons thou hast learned
To throw aside thy blood-stained helm and spear
And with thy bare brow daunt the enemy's front,
Knowing that God will make the lily stalk,
In the soft grasp of naked Gentleness,
Stronger than iron spear to shatter through
The sevenfold toughness of Wrong's idle shield.

A Mystical Ballad.

A MYSTICAL BALLAD.

I.

THE sunset scarce had dimmed away
 Into the twilight's doubtful gray :
 One long cloud o'er the horizon lay,
 'Neath which, a streak of bluish white
 Wavered between the day and night ;
 Over the pine-trees on the hill
 The trembly evening star did thrill,
 And the new moon, with slender rim,
 Through the elm arches gleaming dim,
 Filled memory's chalice to the brim.

II.

On such an eve the heart doth grow
 Full of surmise, and scarce can know
 If it be now or long ago,
 Or if indeed it doth exist ;—
 A wonderful enchanted mist
 From the new moon doth wander out,
 Wrapping all things in mystic doubt,
 So that this world doth seem untrue,
 And all our fancies to take hue
 From some life ages since gone through.

III.

The maiden sat and heard the flow
 Of the west wind so soft and low
 The leaves scarce quivered to and fro ;
 Unbound, her heavy golden hair
 Rippled across her bosom bare,
 Which gleamed with thrilling snowy white
 Far through the magical moonlight :
 The breeze rose with a rustling swell,
 And from afar there came the smell
 Of a long-forgotten lily-bell.

IV.

The dim moon rested on the hill,
 But silent, without thought or will,
 Where sat the dreamy maiden still ;
 And now the moon's tip, like a star,
 Drew down below the horizon's bar ;
 To her black noon the night hath grown,
 Yet still the maiden sits alone,

Pale as a corpse beneath a stream,
And her white bosom still doth gleam
Through the deep midnight like a dream.

V.

Cloudless the morning came and fair,
And lavishly the sun doth share
His gold among her golden hair,
Kindling it all, till slowly so
A glory round her head doth glow ;
A withered flower is in her hand,
That grew in some far distant land,
And, silently transfigured,
With wide calm eyes, and undrooped head,
They found the stranger-maiden dead.

VI.

A youth, that morn, 'Neath other skies,
Felt sudden tears burn in his eyes,
And his heart throng with memories ;
All things without him seemed to win
Strange brotherhood with things within,
And he forever felt that he
Walked in the midst of mystery,
And thenceforth, why, he could not tell,
His heart would curdle at the smell
Of his once-cherished lily-bell.

VII.

Something from him had passed away ;
Some shifting trembles of clear day,
Through starry crannies in his clay,
Grew bright and steadfast, more and more,
Where all had been dull earth before ;
And, through these chinks, like him of old,
His spirit converse high did hold
With clearer loves and wider powers,
That brought him dewy fruits and flowers
From far Elysian groves and bowers.

VIII.

Just on the farthest bound of sense,
Unproved by outward evidence,
But known by a deep influence
Which through our grosser clay doth shine
With light unwaning and divine,



"WITH WIDE CALM EYES, AND UNDROOPED HEAD,
THEY FOUND THE STRANGER-MAIDEN DEAD."

Beyond where highest thought can fly
Stretcheth the world of Mystery—
And they not greatly overween
Who deem that nothing true hath been
Save the unspeakable Unseen.

IX.

One step beyond life's work-day things,
One more beat of the soul's broad wings,
One deeper sorrow sometimes brings
The spirit into that great Vast
Where neither future is nor past ;
None knoweth how he entered there,
But, waking, finds his spirit where
He thought an angel could not soar,
And, what he called false dreams before,
The very air about his door.

X.

These outward seemings are but shows
Whereby the body sees and knows ;
Far down beneath, forever flows
A stream of subtlest sympathies
That make our spirits strangely wise
In awe, and fearful bodings dim
Which, from the sense's outer rim,
Stretch forth beyond our thought and sight,
Fine arteries of circling light,
Pulsed outward from the Infinite.

OPENING POEM TO

A YEAR'S LIFE.

HOPE first the youthful Poet leads,
And he is glad to follow her :
Kind is she, and to all his needs
With a free hand doth minister.

But, when sweet Hope at last hath fled,
Cometh her sister, Memory ;
She wreathes Hope's garlands round her head,
And strives to seem as fair as she

Then Hope comes back and by the hand
She leads a child most fair to see,

Who with a joyous face doth stand
Uniting Hope and Memory.

So brighter grew the Earth around,
And bluer grew the sky above;

The Poet now his guide
hath found,
And follows in the steps of
Love.



DEDICATION.

TO VOLUME OF POEMS
ENTITLED,

A YEAR'S LIFE.

THE gentle Una I have
loved,
The snowy maiden pure
and mild,
Since ever by her side
I roved,
Through ventures strange, a
wondering child,
In fantasy a Red Cross
Knight,
Burning for her dear sake
to fight.

If there be one who can,
like her,
Make sunshine in life's
shady places,
One in whose holy bosom
stir

"IN FANTASY A RED CROSS KNIGHT,
BURNING FOR HER DEAR SAKE TO FIGHT." As many gentle household
graces—

And such I think there needs must be—
Will she accept this book from me?

THRENODIA.

GONE, gone from us ! and shall we see
Those sybil-leaves of destiny,
Those calm eyes, nevermore ?
Those deep, dark eyes so warm and bright,
Wherein the fortunes of the man
Lay slumbering in prophetic light,
In characters a child might scan ?
So bright, and gone forth utterly ?
O stern word—Nevermore !

The stars of those two gentle eyes
Will shine no more on earth ;
Quenched are the hopes that had their birth,
As we watched them slowly rise,
Stars of a mother's fate ;
And she would read them o'er and o'er,
Pondering, as she sate,
Over their dear astrology,
Which she had conned and conned before,
Deeming she needs must read aright
What was writ so passing bright.
And yet, alas ! she knew not why,
Her voice would falter in its song,
And tears would slide from out her eye,
Silent, as they were doing wrong.
Her heart was like a wind-flower, bent
Even to breaking with the balmy dew,
Turning its heavenly nourishment
(That filled with tears its eyes of blue,
Like a sweet suppliant that weeps in prayer,
Making her innocence show more fair,
Albeit unwitting of the ornament,)
Into a load too great for it to bear :
O stern word—Nevermore !

The tongue, that scarce had learned to claim
An entrance to a mother's heart
By that dear talisman, a mother's name,
Sleeps all forgetful of its art !
I love to see the infant soul
(How mighty in the weakness
Of its untutored meekness !)
Peep timidly from out its nest
His lips, the while,

Fluttering with half-fledged words
Or hushing to a smile
That more than words expressed,
When his glad mother on him stole
And snatched him to her breast!
O, thoughts were brooding in those eyes,
That would have soared like strong-winged birds
Far, far into the skies,
Gladding the earth with song
And gushing harmonies,
Had he but tarried with us long!
O stern word—Nevermore!

How peacefully they rest,
Crossfolded there
Upon his little breast,
Those small, white hands that ne'er were still before,
But ever sported with his mother's hair,
Or the plain cross that on her breast she wore!
Her heart no more will beat
To feel the touch of that soft palm,
That ever seemed a new surprise
Sending glad thoughts up to her eyes
To bless him with their holy calm—
Sweet thoughts! that made her eyes as sweet,
How quiet are the hands
That wove those pleasant bands!
But that they do not rise and sink
With his calm breathing, I should think
That he were dropped asleep;
Alas! too deep, too deep
In this his slumber!
Time scarce can number
The years ere he will wake again
O, may we see his eyelids open then!
O stern word—Nevermore!

As the airy gossamere,
Floating in the sunlight clear,
Where'er it toucheth clinging tightly
Round glossy leaf or stump unsightly,
So from his spirit wandered out
Tendrils spreading all about,
Knitting all things to its thrall
With a perfect love of all:
O stern word—Nevermore!

He did but float a little way
Adown the stream of time,
With dreamy eyes watching the ripples play,
Or listen to their fairy chime;
His slender sail
Ne'er felt the gale;
He did but float a little way,
And, putting to the shore
While yet 't was early day,
Went calmly on his way,
To dwell with us no more!
No jarring did he feel,
No grating on his vessel's keel;
A strip of silver sand
Mingled the waters with the land
Where he was seen no more:
O stern word—Nevermore!

Full short his journey was; no dust
Of earth unto his sandals clave;
The weary weight that old men must,
He bore not to the grave.
He seemed a cherub who had lost his way
And wandered hither, so his stay
With us was short, and 'twas most meet
That he should be no delver in Earth's clod,
Nor need to pause and cleanse his feet
To stand before his God;
O blest word—Evermore!

THE SERENADE.

GENTLE, Lady, be thy sleeping,
Peaceful may thy dreamings be.
While around thy soul is sweeping,
Dreamy-winged, our melody;
Chant we, Brothers, sad and slow,
Let our song be soft and low
As the voice of other years,
Let our hearts within us melt,
To gentleness, as if we felt
The dropping of our mother's tears.

The Serenade.

Lady! now our song is bringing
 Back again thy childhood's hours—
 Hearest thou the humbee singing
 Drowsily among the flowers?
 Sleepily, sleepily
 In the noontide swayeth he,
 Half rested on the slender stalks
 That edge those well-known garden walks;
 Hearest thou the fitful whirring
 Of the humbird's viewless wings—
 Feel'st not round thy heart the stirring
 Of childhood's half-forgotten things?

Seest thou the dear old dwelling
 With the woodbine round the door?
 Brothers, soft! her breast is swelling
 With the busy thoughts of yore;
 Lowly sing ye, sing ye mildly,
 Rouse her spirit not so wildly,
 Lest she sleep not any more.
 'T is the pleasant summertide,
 Open stands the window wide—
 Whose voices, Lady, art thou drinking?
 Who sings that best beloved tune
 In a clear note, rising, sinking,
 Like a thrush's song in June?
 Whose laugh is that which rings so clear
 And joyous in thine eager ear?

Lower, Brothers, yet more low
 Weave the song in mazy twines;
 She heareth now the west wind blow
 At evening through the clump of pines;
 O! mournful is their tune,
 As of a crazed thing
 Who, to herself alone,
 Is ever murmuring,
 Through the night and through the day,
 For something that hath passed away.
 Often, Lady, hast thou listened,
 Often have thy blue eyes glistened.
 When the summer evening breeze
 Moaned sadly through those lonely trees,
 Or the fierce wind from the north



"LOWLY SING YE, SING YE MILDLY,"

Song.

Wrung their mournful music forth.
 Ever the river floweth
 In an unbroken stream,
 Ever the west wind bloweth,
 Murmuring as he goeth,
 And mingling with her dream;
 Onward still the river sweepeth
 With a sound of long-agone;
 Lowly, Brothers, lo! she weepeth,
 She is now no more alone;
 Long-loved forms and long-loved faces
 Round her pillow throng,
 Through her memory's desert places
 Flow the waters of our song.
 Lady! if thy life be holy
 As when thou wert yet a child,
 Though our song be melancholy,
 It will stir no anguish wild;
 For the soul that hath lived well,
 For the soul that child-like is,
 There is quiet in the spell
 That brings back early memories.

 SONG.

I.

LIFT up the curtains of thine eyes
 And let their light outshine!
 Let me adore the mysteries
 Of those mild orbs of thine,
 Which ever queenly calm do roll,
 Attuned to an ordered soul!

II.

Open thy lips yet once again
 And, while my soul doth hush
 With awe, pour forth that holy strain
 Which seemeth me to gush,
 A fount of music, running o'er
 From thy deep spirit's inmost core!

III.

The melody that dwells in thee
Begets in me as well
A spiritual harmony,



"OPEN THY LIPS YET ONCE AGAIN."

A mild and blessed spell;
Far, far above earth's atmosphere
I rise, whene'er thy voice I hear.

The Departed.

THE DEPARTED.

NOT they alone are the departed,
 Who have laid them down to sleep
 In the grave narrow and lonely,
 Not for them only do I vigils keep,
 Not for them only am I heavy-hearted,
 Not for them only !

Many, many, there are many
 Who no more are with me here,
 As cherished, as beloved as any
 Whom I have seen upon the bier.
 I weep to think of those old faces,
 To see them in their grief or mirth ;
 I weep—for there are empty places
 Around my heart's once crowded hearth ;
 The cold ground doth not cover them,
 The grass hath not grown over them,
 Yet are they gone from me on earth ;—
 O ! how more bitter is this weeping,
 Than for those lost ones who are sleeping
 Where sun will shine and flowers blow,
 Where gentle winds will whisper low,
 And the stars have them in their keeping !
 Wherefore from me who loved you so,
 O ! wherefore did ye go ?
 I have shed full many a tear,
 I have wrestled oft in prayer—
 But ye do not come again ;
 How could anything so dear,
 How could anything so fair,
 Vanish like the summer rain ?
 No, no, it cannot be,
 But ye are still with me !

And yet, O ! where art thou,
 Childhood, with sunny brow
 And floating hair ?
 Where art thou hiding now ?
 I have sought thee everywhere,
 All among the shrubs and flowers
 Of those garden-walks of ours—
 Thou art not there !
 When the shadow of Night's wings
 Hath darkened all the Earth,

I listen to thy gambolings
Beside the cheerful hearth—
Thou art not there!
I listen to the far-off bell,
I murmur o'er the little songs
Which thou didst love so well,
Pleasant memories come in throngs
And mine eyes are blurred with tears,
But no glimpse of thee appears:
Lonely am I in the Winter, lonely in the Spring,
Summer and Harvest bring no trace of thee—



“WHEN THE SHADOW OF NIGHT'S WINGS
HATH DARKENED ALL THE EARTH.”

Oh! whither, whither art thou wandering,
Thou who didst once so cleave to me?

And Love is gone:—
I have seen him come,
I have seen him, too, depart,
Leaving desolate his home,
His bright home in my heart.
I am alone!
Cold, cold is his hearth-stone,
Wide open stands the door;

The frolic and the gentle one
 Shall I see no more, no more ?
 At the fount the bowl is broken,
 I shall drink it not again,
 All my longing prayers are spoken,
 And felt, ah, woe is me, in vain !
 Oh childish hopes and childish fancies,
 Whither have ye fled away ?
 I long for you in mournful trances,
 I long for you by night and day ;
 Beautiful thoughts that once were mine,
 Might I but win you back once more.
 Might ye about my being twine
 And cluster as ye did of yore !
 O ! do not let me pray in vain—
 How good and happy I should be,
 How free from every shade of pain,
 If ye would come again to me !
 O, come again ! come, come again !
 Hath the sun forgot its brightness,
 Have the stars forgot to shine,
 That they bring not their wonted lightness
 To this weary heart of mine ?
 'T is not the sun that shone on thee,
 Happy childhood, long ago—
 Not the same stars silently
 Looking on the same bright snow—
 Not the same that Love and I
 Together watched in days gone by !
 No, not the same, alas for me !

Would God that those who early went
 To the house dark and low,
 For whom our mourning heads were bent,
 For whom our steps were slow ;
 O would that these alone had left us,
 That Fate of these alone had reft us,
 Would God indeed that it were so !
 Many leaves too soon must wither,
 Many flowers too soon must die,
 Many bright ones wandering hither,
 We know not whence, we know not why,
 Like the leaves and like the flowers,
 Vanish, ere the summer hours,
 That brought them to us, have gone by.

O for the hopes and for the feelings,
 Childhood, that I shared with thee—
 The high resolves, the bright revealings
 Of the soul's might, which thou gav'st me,
 Gentle Love, woe worth the day,
 Woe worth the hour when thou wert born,
 Woe worth the day thou fled'st away—
 A shade across the wind-waved corn—
 A dewdrop falling from the leaves
 Chance-shaken in a summer's morn!
 Woe, woe is me! my sick heart grieves,
 Companionless and anguish-worn!
 I know it well, our manly years
 Must be baptized in bitter tears;
 Full many fountains must run dry
 That youth has dreamed for long hours by,
 Choked by convention's siroc blast
 Or drifting sands of many cares;
 Slowly they leave us all at last,
 And cease their flowing unawares.

 THE BOBOLINK.

ANACREON of the meadow,
 Drunk with the joy of spring!
 Beneath the tall pine's voiceful shadow
 I lie and drink thy jargonings;
 My soul is full with melodies,
 One drop would overflow it,
 And send the tears into mine eyes—
 But what carest thou to know it?
 Thy heart is free as mountain air,
 And of thy lays thou hast no care,
 Scattering them gayly everywhere,
 Happy, unconscious poet!

Upon a tuft of meadow grass,
 While thy loved-one tends the nest,
 Thou swayest as the breezes pass,
 Unburdening thine o'erfull breast
 Of the crowded songs that fill it,
 Just as joy may choose to will it.
 Lord of thy love and liberty,
 The blithest bird of merry May,

The Bobolink.

Thou turnest thy bright eye on me,
That says as plain as eye can say—
“Here sit we, in the sunny weather,
I and my modest mate together;
Whatever your wise thoughts may be,
Under that gloomy old pine-tree,
We do not value them a feather.”

Now, leaving earth and me behind,
Thou beatest up against the wind,
Or, floating slowly down before it.
Above thy grass-hid nest thou flutterest
And thy bridal love-song utterest,
Raining showers of music o'er it,
Weary never, still thou trillest,
Spring-glad some lays,
As of moss-rimmed water brooks
Murmuring through pebbly nooks
In quiet summer days.
My heart with happiness thou fillest,
I seem again to be a boy
Watching thee, gay, blithesome lover,
O'er the bending grass-tops hover,
Quivering thy wings for joy.
There 's something in the apple-blossom,
The greening grass and bobolink's song,
That wakes again within my bosom
Feelings which have slumbered long.
As long, long years ago I wandered,
I seem to wander even yet,
The hours the idle school-boy squandered.
The man would die ere he'd forget.
O hours that frosty eld deemed wasted,
Nodding his gray head toward my books,
I dearer prize the lore I tasted
With you, among the trees and brooks,
Than all that I have gained since then
From learned books or study-withered men
Nature, thy soul was one with mine,
And, as a sister by a younger brother
Is loved, each flowing to the other,
Such love for me was thine.
Or wert thou not more like a gentle mother
With sympathy and loving power to heal,
Against whose heart my throbbing head I'd lay

And moan my childish sorrows all away,
 Till calm and holiness would o'er me steal ?
 Was not the golden sunset a dear friend ?
 Found I no kindness in the silent moon,
 And the green trees, whose tops did sway and bend,
 Low singing evermore their pleasant tune ?
 Felt I no heart in dim and solemn woods—
 No loved-one's voice in lonely solitudes !



“ABOVE THY GRASS-HID NEST THOU FLUTTEREST.”

Yes, yes! unhoodwinked then my spirit's eyes,
 Blind leaders had not *taught me* to be wise.

Dear hours! which now again I over-live,
 Hearing and seeing with the ears and eyes
 Of childhood, ye were bees, that to the hive
 Of my young heart came laden with rich prize,
 Gathered in fields and woods and sunny dells, to be
 My spirit's food in days more wintery.

Yea, yet again ye come! ye come!
 And, like a child once more at home
 After long sojourning in alien climes,
 I lie upon my mother's breast,
 Feeling the blessedness of rest,
 And dwelling in the light of other times.

O ye whose living is not *Life*,
 Whose dying is but death,
 Long, empty toil and petty strife,
 Rounded with loss of breath!
 Go, look on Nature's countenance,
 Drink in the blessing of her glance;
 Look on the sunset, hear the wind,
 The cataract, the awful thunder;
 Go, worship by the sea;
 Then, and then only, shall ye find,
 With ever-growing wonder,
 Man is not all in all to ye;
 Go with a meek and humble soul,
 Then shall the scales of self unroll
 From off your eyes—the weary packs
 Drop from your heavy-laden backs;
 And ye shall see,
 With reverent and hopeful eyes,
 Glowing with new-born energies,
 How great a thing it is to BE!



FORGETFULNESS.

THERE is a haven of sure rest
 From the loud world's bewildering
 stress:
 As a bird dreaming on her nest,
 As dew hid in a rose's breast,
 As Hesper in the glowing West;
 So the heart sleeps
 In thy calm deeps,
 Serene Forgetfulness!

"AS, IN WHITE LILY CAVES, A BEE." No sorrow in that place may be,
 The noise of life grows less and less:
 As moss far down within the sea,
 As, in white lily caves, a bee,
 As life in a hazy reverie;

So the heart's wave
In thy dim cave,
Hushes, Forgetfulness!

Duty and care fade far away :
What toil may be we cannot guess :
As a ship anchored in the bay,
As a cloud at summer-noon astray,
As water-blooms in a breezeless day ;
So, 'neath thine eyes,
The full heart lies,
And dreams, Forgetfulness!

SONG.

I.

WHAT reck I of the stars, when I
May gaze into thine eyes,
O'er which the brown hair flowingly
Is parted maidenwise
From thy pale forehead, calm and bright,
Over thy cheeks so rosy white ?

II.

What care I for the red moon-rise ?
Far liefer would I sit
And watch the joy within thine eyes
Gush up at sight of it ;
Thyself my queenly moon shall be,
Ruling my heart's deep tides for me ?

III.

What heed I if the sky be blue ?
So are thy holy eyes,
And bright with shadows ever new
Of changeful sympathies,
Which in thy soul's unruffled deep
Rest evermore, but never sleep.

The Poet.

THE POET.

He who hath felt Life's mystery
 Press on him like thick night,
 Whose soul hath known no history
 But struggling after light;—
 He who hath seen dim shapes arise
 In the soundless depths of soul,
 Which gaze on him with meaning eyes
 Full of the mighty whole,



“AND STARTING FROM HIS RESTLESS BED.”

Yet will no word of healing speak,
 Although he pray night-long,
 “Oh help me, save me! I am weak,
 And ye are wondrous strong!”
 Who in the midnight dark and deep,
 Hath felt a voice of might
 Come echoing through the halls of sleep
 From the lone heart of Night,

And starting from his restless bed,
 Hath watched and wept to know
 What meant that oracle of dread
 That stirred his being so;
 He who hath felt how strong and great
 This God-like soul of man,
 And looked full in the eyes of Fate,
 Since Life and Thought began;
 The armor of whose moveless trust
 Knoweth no spot of weakness,
 Who hath trod fear into the dust
 Beneath the feet of meekness;—
 He who hath calmly born his cross,
 Knowing himself the king
 Of time, nor counted it a loss
 To learn by suffering;—
 And who hath worshipped woman still
 With a pure soul and lowly,
 Nor ever hath in deed or will
 Profaned her temple holy—
 He is the Poet, him unto
 The gift of song is given,
 Whose life is lofty, strong, and true,
 Who never fell from Heaven;
 He is the Poet, from his lips
 To live forevermore,
 Majestical as full-sailed ships,
 The words of Wisdom pour.

FLOWERS.

“Haile be thou, holie Herbe,
 Growing on the ground,
 All in the mount of Calvary
 First wert thou found :
 Thou art good for manie a sore,
 Thou healest manie a wound,
 In the name of sweete Jesus
 I take thee from the ground.”

Ancient Charm-verse

I.

When, from a pleasant ramble, home
 Fresh-stored with quiet thoughts, I come,

I pluck some wayside flower
 And press it in the choicest nook
 Of a much-loved and oft-read book
 And when upon its leaves I look
 In a less happy hour,
 Dear memory bears me far away
 Unto her fairy bower,
 And on her breast my head I lay,
 While in her motherly, sweet strain,
 She sings me gently back again
 To by-gone feelings, until they
 Seem children born of yesterday.

II.

Yes, many a story of past hours
 I read in these dear withered flowers,
 And once again I seem to be
 Lying beneath the old oak-tree,
 And looking up into the sky,
 Through thick leaves rifted fitfully,
 Lulled by the rustling of the vine,
 Or the faint low of far-off kine ;
 And once again I seem
 To watch the whirling bubbles flee,
 Through shade and gleam alternately,
 Down the vine-bowered stream ;
 Or 'neath the odorous linden-trees,
 When summer twilight lingers long,
 To hear the flowing of the breeze
 And unseen insects' slumberous song,
 That mingle into one and seem
 Like dim murmurs of a dream ;
 Fair faces, too, I seem to see,
 Smiling from pleasant eyes at me,
 And voices sweet I hear,
 That like remembered melody,
 Flow through my spirit's ear.

III.

A poem every flower is,
 And every leaf a line,
 And with delicious memories
 They fill this heart of mine :
 No living blossoms are so clear



"LYING BENEATH THE OLD OAK TREE,
AND LOOKING UP INTO THE SKY."

As these dead relics treasured here ;
 One tells of love, of friendship one,
 Love's quiet after-sunset time,
 When the all-dazzling light is gone,
 And with the soul's low vesper-chime,
 O'er half its heaven doth out-flow
 A holy calm and steady glow.
 Some are gay feast-songs, some are dirges
 In some a joy with sorrow merges !
 One sings the shadowed woods, and one the roar
 Of ocean's everlasting surges,
 Tumbling upon the beach's hard-beat floor,
 Or sliding backward from the shore
 To meet the landward waves and slowly plunge once
 more.
 O flowers of grace, I bless ye all
 By the dear faces ye recall !

IV.

Upon the bank's of Life's deep streams
 Full many a flower groweth,
 Which with a wondrous fragrance teems,
 And in the silent water gleams,
 And trembles as the water floweth ;
 Many a one the wave upteareth,
 Washing ever the roots away,
 And far upon its bosom beareth,
 To bloom no more in Youth's glad May,
 As farther on the river runs,
 Flowing more deep and strong,
 Only a few pale, scattered ones
 Are seen the dreary banks along ;
 And where those flowers do not grow,
 The river floweth dark and chill,
 Its voice is sad, and with its flow
 Mingles ever a sense of ill ;
 Then, Poet, thou who gather dost
 Of Life's blest flowers the brightest,
 O, take good heed they be not lost
 While with the angry flood thou fightest !

V.

In the cool grottos of the soul,
 Whence flows thought's crystal river,
 Whence songs of joy forever roll

To Him who is the Giver—
 There store thou them, where fresh and green
 Their leaves and blossoms may be seen,
 A spring of joy that faileth never ;
 There store thou them, and they shall be
 A blessing and a peace to thee,
 And in their youth and purity
 Thou shalt be young forever !
 Then, with their fragrance rich and rare,
 Thy living shall be rife,
 Strength shall be thine thy cross to bear,
 And they shall be a chaplet fair,
 Breathing a pure and holy air,
 To crown thy holy life.

VI.

O Poet ! above all men blest,
 Take heed that thus thou store them ;
 Love, Hope, and Faith shall ever rest,
 Sweet birds (upon how sweet a nest !)
 Watchfully brooding o'er them.
 And from those flowers of Paradise
 Scatter thou many a blesséd seed,
 Wherefrom an offspring may arise
 To cheer the hearts and light the eyes
 Of after-voyagers in their need.
 They shall not fall on stony ground,
 But, yielding all their hundred-fold,
 Shall shed a peacefulness around,
 Whose strengthening joy may not be told,
 So shall thy name be blest of all,
 And thy remembrance never die ;
 For of that seed shall surely fall
 In the fair garden of Eternity,
 Exult then in the nobleness
 Of this thy work so holy,
 Yet be not thou one jot the less
 Humble and meek and lowly.
 But let thine exultation be
 The reverence of a bended knee ;
 And by thy life a poem write,
 Built strongly day by day—
 And on the rock of Truth and Right
 Its deep foundations lay.

The Lover.

VII.

It is thy DUTY! Guard it well!
 For unto thee hath much been given,
 And thou canst make this life a Hell,
 Or Jacob's-ladder up to Heaven,
 Let not thy baptism in Life's wave
 Make thee like him whom Homer sings—
 A sleeper in a living grave,
 Callous and hard to outward things;
 But open all thy soul and sense
 To every blessed influence
 That from the heart of Nature springs:
 Then shall thy Life-flowers be to thee,
 When thy best years are told,
 As much as these have been to me—
 Yea, more, a thousand-fold!

THE LOVER.

I.

Go roam the world from East to West.
 Search every land beneath the sky,
 You cannot find a man so blest,
 A king so powerful as I,
 Though you should seek eternally.

II.

For I a gentle lover be,
 Sitting at my loved-one's side;
 She giveth her whole soul to me
 Without a wish or thought of pride,
 And she shall be my cherished bride,

III,

No show of gaudiness hath she,
 She doth not flash with jewels rare;
 In beautiful simplicity
 She weareth leafy garlands fair,
 Or modest flowers in her hair.

IV.

Sometimes she dons a robe of green,
 Sometimes a robe of snowy white,



"SOMETIMES SHE DONS A ROBE OF GREEN,
SOMETIMES A ROBE OF SNOWY WHITE."

But, in whatever garb she's seen,
It seems most beautiful and right,
And is the loveliest to my sight.

V.

Not I her lover am alone,
Yet unto all she doth suffice,
None jealous is, and every one
Reads love and truth within her eyes,
And deemeth her his own dear prize.

VI.

And so thou art, Eternal Nature!
Yes, bride of Heaven, so thou art;
Thou wholly lovest every creature,
Giving to each no stinted part,
But filling every peaceful heart.

TO E. W. G.

TO E. W. G.

“DEAR Child! dear happy Girl! if thou appear
 Heedless—untouched with awe or serious thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham’s bosom all the year;
 And worship’st at the Temple’s inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.”

—*Wordsworth.*

As through a strip of sunny light
 A white dove flashes swiftly on,
 So suddenly before my sight
 Thou gleamed’st a moment and wert gone;
 And yet I long shall bear in mind
 The pleasant thoughts thou left’st behind,

Thou madest me happy with thine eyes,
 And happy with thine open smile,
 And, as I write, sweet memories
 Come thronging round me all the while:
 Thou madest me happy with thine eyes—
 And gentle feelings long forgot
 Looked up and oped their eyes
 Like violets when they see a spot
 Of summer in the skies.

Around thy playful lips did glitter
 Heat-lightnings of a girlish scorn;
 Harmless they were, for nothing bitter
 In thy dear heart was ever born—
 That merry heart that could not lie
 Within its warm nest quietly,
 But ever from each full, dark eye
 Was looking kindly night and morn.

There was an archness in thine eyes,
 Born of the gentlest mockeries,
 And thy light laughter rang as clear
 As water-drops I loved to hear
 In days of boyhood, as they fell
 Tinkling far down the dim, still well;
 And with its sound come back once more
 The feelings of my early years,
 And half aloud I murmured o’er—



"I BOUND A LARCH-TWIG ROUND WITH FLOWERS,
WHICH THOU DIDST TWINE AMONG THY HAIR."

“Sure I have heard that voice before,
It is so pleasant in mine ears.”

Whenever thou didst look on me
I thought of merry birds,
And something of spring's melody
Came to me in thy words;
Thy thoughts did dance and bound along
Like happy children in their play,
Whose hearts run over into song
For gladness of the summer's day;
And mine grew dizzy with the sight,
Still feeling lighter and more light,
Till, joining hands, they whirled away,
As blithe and merrily as they.

I bound a larch-twigg round with flowers,
Which thou didst twine among thy hair,
And gladsome were the few, short hours
When I was with thee there :
So now that thou art far away,
Safe-nestled in thy warmer clime,
In memory of a happy day
I twine this simple wreath of rhyme.

Dost mind how she, whom thou dost love
More than in light words may be said,
A coronal of amaranth wove
About thy duly-sobered head,
Which kept itself a moment still
That she might have her gentle will ?
Thy childlike grace and purity
O keep forevermore,
And as thou art, still strive to be,
That on the farther shore
Of Time's dark waters ye may meet,
And she may twine around thy brow
A wreath of those bright flowers that grow
Where blessed angels set their feet !

ISABEL.

As the leaf upon the tree,
Fluttering, gleaming constantly,
Such a lightsome thing was she,

My gay and gentle Isabel!
Her heart was fed with love-springs sweet,
And in her face you'd see it beat
To hear the sound of welcome feet—
And were not mine so, Isabel?

She knew it not, but she was fair,
And like a moonbeam was her hair,
That falls where flowing ripples are
In summer evenings, Isabel!
Her heart and tongue were scarce apart,
Unwittingly her lips would part,
And love come gushing from her heart.
The woman's heart of Isabel.

So pure her flesh-garb, and like dew,
That in her features glimmered through
Each working of her spirit true,
In wondrous beauty, Isabel!
A sunbeam struggling through thick leaves,
A reaper's song mid yellow sheaves,
Less glad some were :—my spirit grieves
To think of thee, mild Isabel!

I know not when I loved thee first ;
Not loving, I had been accurst,
Yet, having loved, my heart will burst,
Longing for thee, dear Isabel!
With silent tears my cheeks are wet,
I would be calm, I would forget,
But thy blue eyes gaze on me yet,
When stars have risen, Isabel.

The winds mourn for thee, Isabel,
The flowers expect thee in the dell,
Thy gentle spirit loved them well,
And I for thy sake, Isabel!
The sunsets seem less lovely now
Than when, leaf checkered, on thy brow
They fell as lovingly as thou
Lingered'st till moon-rise, Isabel!

At dead of night I seem to see
Thy fair, pale features constantly
Upturned in silent prayer for me,
O'er moveless clasped hands, Isabel!

I call thee, thou dost not reply;
The stars gleam coldly on thine eye,
As like a dream thou flittest by,
And leav'st me weeping, Isabel!



"THY FAIR, PALE FEATURES CONSTANTLY
UPTURNED IN SILENT PRAYER FOR ME."

MUSIC.

I.

I SEEM to lie with drooping eyes,
Dreaming sweet dreams,
Half longings and half memories
In woods where streams

With trembling shades and whirling gleams,
 Many and bright,
 In song and light,
 Are ever, ever flowing,
 While the wind, if we list to the rustling grass,
 Which numbers his footsteps as they pass,
 Seems scarcely to be blowing;
 And the far-heard voice of Spring,
 From sunny slopes comes wandering.
 Calling the violets from the sleep,
 That bound them under the snow-drifts deep,
 To open their childlike, asking eyes
 On the new summer's paradise,
 And mingled with the gurgling waters—
 As the dreamy witchery
 Of Acheloüs silver-voiced daughters
 Rose and fell with the heaving sea,
 Whose great heart swelled with ecstasy—
 The song of many a floating bird,
 Winding through the rifted trees,
 Is dreamily half-heard—
 A sister stream of melodies
 Rippled by the flutterings
 Of rapture-quivered wings.

II.

And now beside a cataract
 I lie, and through my soul,
 From over me and under,
 The never-ceasing thunder
 Arousingly doth roll;
 Through the darkness all compact,
 Through the trackless sea of gloom,
 Sad and deep I hear it boom;
 At intervals the cloud is cracked
 And a livid flash doth hiss
 Downward from its floating home,
 Lighting up the precipice
 And the never-resting foam
 With a dim and ghastly glare,
 Which, for a heart-beat, in the air,
 Shows the sweeping shrouds
 Of the midnight clouds
 And their wildly-scattered hair.

III.

Now listening to a woman's tone,
 In a wood I sit alone—
 Alone because our souls are one ;—
 All around my heart it flows,
 Lulling me in deep repose ;
 I fear to speak, I fear to move,



"AND A LIVID FLASH DOTH HISS."

Lest I should break the spell I love—
 Low and gentle, calm and clear,
 Into my inmost soul it goes,
 As if my brother dear,
 Who is no longer here,
 Had bended from the sky
 And murmured in my ear

A strain of that high harmony,
Which they may sing alone
Who worship round the throne.

IV.

Now in a fairy boat,
On the bright waves of song,
Full merrily I float,
Merrily float along;
My helm is veered, I care not how,
My white sail bellies over me,
And bright as gold the ripples be
That plash beneath the bow;
Before, behind,
They feel the wind,
And they are dancing joyously—
While faintly heard, along the far-off shore
The surf goes plunging with a lingering roar:
Or anchored in a shadowy cove,
Entranced with harmonies,
Slowly I sink and rise
As the slow waves of music move.

V.

Now softly dashing,
Bubbling, plashing,
Mazy, dreamy,
Faint and streamy,
Ripples into ripples melt,
Not so strongly heard as felt;
Now rapid and quick,
While the heart beats thick,
The music's silver wavelets crowd,
Distinct and clear, but never loud;
And now all solemnly and slow,
In mild, deep tones they warble low,
Like the glad song of angels, when
They sang good will and peace to men;
Now faintly heard and far,
As if the spirit's ears
Had caught the anthem of a star
Chanting with his brother-spheres
In the midnight dark and deep,
When the body is asleep
And wondrous shadows pour in streams

From the twofold gate of dreams ;
 Now onward roll the billows, swelling
 With a tempest-sound of might,
 As of voices doom foretelling
 To the silent ear of Night ;
 And now a mingled ecstasy
 Of all sweet sounds it is ;—
 O ! who may tell the agony
 Of rapture such as this ?

I have drunk of the drink of immortals,
 I have drunk of the life-giving wine,
 And now I may pass the bright portals
 That open into a realm divine !
 I have drunk it through mine ears
 In the ecstasy of song,
 When mine eyes would fill with tears
 That its life were not more long ;
 I have drunk it through mine eyes
 In beauty's every shape,
 And now around my soul it lies,
 No juice of earthly grape !
 Wings ! wings are given to me ;
 I can flutter, I can rise,
 Like a new life gushing through me ;
 Sweep the heavenly harmonies !

SONG.

O ! I MUST look on that sweet face once more before I die ;
 God grant that it may lighten up with joy when I draw nigh ;
 God grant that she may look on me as kindly as she seems
 In the long night, the restless night, i' the sunny land of
 dreams !

I hoped, I thought, she loved me once, and yet, I know not
 why,
 There is a coldness in her speech, and a coldness in her eye,
 Something that in another's look would not seem cold to me.
 And yet like ice I feel it chill the heart of memory.

She does not come to greet me so frankly as she did,
 And in her utmost openness I feel there 's something hid ;
 She almost seems to shun me, as if she thought that I
 Might win her gentle heart again to feelings long gone by.

I sought the first spring-buds for her, the fairest and the best,
And she wore them for their loveliness upon her spotless
breast,
The blood-root and the violet, the frail anemone,
She wore them, and alas ! I deemed it was for love of me !



"MY FACE I COVER WITH MY HANDS, AND BITTERLY I WEEP."

As flowers in a darksome place stretch forward to the light,
So to the memory of her I turn by day and night ;
As flowers in a darksome place grow thin and pale and wan,
So is it with my darkened heart, now that her light is gone.

The thousand little things that love doth treasure up for aye,
 And brood upon with moistened eyes when she that's lov'd 's
 away,
 The word, the look, the smile, the blush, the ribbon that she
 wore,
 Each day they grow more dear to me, and pain me more and
 more.

My face I cover with my hands, and bitterly I weep.
 That the quick-gathering sands of life should choke a love so
 deep,
 And that the stream, so pure and bright, must turn it from its
 track,
 Or to the heart-springs, whence it rose, roll its full waters
 back!

As calm as doth the lily float close by the lakelet's brim,
 So calm and spotless, down time's stream, her peaceful days
 did swim,
 And I had longed, and dreamed, and prayed, that closely by
 her side,
 Down to a haven still and sure, my happy life might glide.

But now, alas! those golden days of youth and hope are o'er,
 And I must dream those dreams of joy, those guiltless dreams
 no more;
 Yet there is something in my heart that whispers ceaselessly,
 "Would God that I might see that face once more before I
 die!"

IANTHE.

I.

THERE is a light within her eyes,
 Like gleams of wandering fire-flies;
 From light to shade it leaps and moves
 Whenever in her soul arise
 The holy shapes of things she loves;
 Fitful it shines and changes ever,
 Like star-lit ripples on a river.
 Or summer sunshine on the eaves
 Of silver-trembling poplar leaves,
 Where the lingering dew-drops quiver,
 I may not tell the blessedness
 Her mild eyes send to mine,

The sunset-tinted haziness
 Of their mysterious shine,
 The dim and holy mournfulness
 Of their mellow light divine;
 The shadow of the lashes lie
 Over them so lovingly,
 That they seem to melt away
 In a doubtful twilight-gray,
 While I watch the stars arise
 In the evening of her eyes.
 I love it, yet I almost dread
 To think what it foreshadoweth;
 And, when I muse how I have read
 That such strange light betokened death
 Instead of fire-fly gleams, I see
 Wild corpse-lights gliding waveringly.

II.

With wayward thoughts her eyes are bright,
 Like shiftings of the northern-light,
 Hither, thither, swiftly glance they,
 In a mazy twining dance they,
 Like ripply lights the sunshine weaves,
 Thrown backward from a shaken nook.
 Below some tumbling water-brook
 On the o'erarching platan-leaves,
 All through her glowing face they flit,
 And rest in their deep dwelling-place,
 Those fathomless blue eyes of hers,
 Till, from her burning soul re-lit,
 While her upheaving bosom stirs,
 They stream again across her face
 And with such hope and glory fill it,
 Death could not have the heart to chill it.
 Yet when their wild light fades again,
 I feel a sudden sense of pain,
 As if, while yet her eyes were gleaming,
 And like a shower of sun-lit rain
 Bright fancies from her face were streaming,
 Her trembling soul might flit away
 As swift and suddenly as they.

III.

A wild, inspired earnestness
 Her inmost being fills,

And eager self-forgetfulness,
 That speaks not what it wills.
 But what unto her soul is given,
 A living oracle from Heaven,
 Which scarcely in her breast is born
 When on her trembling lips it thrills,
 And, like a burst of golden skies
 Through storm-clouds on a sudden torn,
 Like a glory of the morn,
 Beams marvellously from her eyes.
 And then, like a Spring-swollen river,
 Roll the deep waves of her full-hearted thought
 Crested with sun-lit spray,
 Her wild lips curve and quiver,
 And my rapt soul, on the strong tide upcaught,
 Unwittingly is borne away,
 Lulled by a dreamful music ever,
 Far—through the solemn twilight-gray
 Of hoary woods—through valleys green
 Which the trailing vine embowers,
 And where the purple-clustered grapes are seen
 Deep-glowing through rich clumps of waving flowers—
 Now over foaming rapids swept
 And with maddening rapture shook—
 Now gliding where the water-plants have slept
 For ages in a moss-rimmed nook—
 Enwoven by a wild-eyed band
 Of earth-forgetting dreams,
 I float to a delicious land
 By a sunset heaven spanned,
 And musical with streams;—
 Around, the calm, majestic forms
 And god-like eyes of early Greece I see,
 Or listen, till my spirit warms
 To songs of courtly chivalry,
 Or weep, unmindful if my tears be seen,
 For the meek, suffering love of poor Undine.

IV.

Her thoughts are never memories,
 But ever changeful, ever new,
 Fresh and beautiful as dew
 That in a dell at noontide lies,
 Or, at the close of summer day,
 The pleasant breath of new-mown hay:

Swiftly they come and pass
 As golden birds across the sun.
 As light-gleams on tall meadow-grass
 Which the wind just breathes upon.
 And when she speaks, her eyes I see
 Down-gushing through their silken lattices,
 Like stars that quiver tremblingly
 Through leafy branches of the trees,
 And her pale cheeks do flush and glow
 With speaking flashes bright and rare
 As crimson North-lights on new-fallen snow,
 From out the veiling of her hair—
 Her careless hair that scatters down
 On either side her eyes,
 A waterfall leaf-tinged with brown
 And lit with the sunrise.

v.

When first I saw her, not of earth,
 But heavenly both in grief and mirth,
 I thought her; she did seem
 As fair and full of mystery,
 As bodiless, as forms we see
 In the rememberings of a dream;
 A moon-lit mist, a strange, dim light
 Circled her spirit from my sight;—
 Each day more beautiful she grew,
 More earthly every day,
 Yet that mysterious, moony hue
 Faded not all away;
 She has a sister's sympathy
 With all the wanderers of the sky
 But most I've seen her bosom stir
 When moonlight round her fell,
 For the mild moon it loveth her,
 She loveth it as well,
 And of their love perchance this grace
 Was born into her wondrous face.
 I cannot tell how it may be,
 For both, methinks, can scarce be true,
 Still as she earthly grew to me,
 She grew more heavenly too;
 She seems one born in Heaven
 With earthly feelings,
 For, while unto her soul are given

More pure revealings
 Of holiest love and truth,
 Yet is the mildness of her eyes
 Made up of quickest sympathies,
 Of kindliness and ruth;
 So, though some shade of awe doth stir
 Our souls for one so far above us,
 We feel secure that she will love us,
 And cannot keep from loving her.
 She is a poem, which to me
 In speech and look is written bright,
 And to her life's rich harmony
 Doth ever sing itself aright;
 Dear, glorious creature!
 With eyes so dewy bright,
 And tenderest feeling
 Itself revealing
 In every look and feature,
 Welcome as a homestead light
 To one long-wandering in a clouded night;
 O lovelier for her woman's weakness,
 Which yet is strongly mailed
 In armor of courageous meekness
 And faith that never failed!

VI.

Early and late, at her soul's gate,
 Sits Chastity in warderwise,
 No thoughts unchallenged, small or great,
 Goes thence into her eyes;
 Nor may a low, unworthy thought
 Beyond that virgin warder win,
 Nor one, whose password is not "ought,"
 May go without or enter in,
 I call her, seeing those pure eyes,
 The Eve of a new Paradise,
 Which she by gentle word and deed,
 And look no less, doth still create
 About her, for her great thoughts breed
 A calm that lifts us from our fallen state,
 And makes us while with her both good and great—
 Nor is their memory wanting in our need:
 With stronger loving, every hour,
 Turneth my heart to this frail flower
 Which thoughtless of the world, hath grown

To beauty and meek gentleness,
Here in a fair world of its own—
By woman's instinct trained alone—
A lily fair which God did bless,
And which from Nature's heart did draw
Love, wisdom, peace, and Heaven's perfect law.

LOVE'S ALTAR.

I.

I BUILT an altar in my soul,
I builded it to one alone;
And ever silently I stole,
In happy days of long ago,
To make rich offerings to that ONE

II.

'T was garlanded with purest thought,
And crowned with fancy's flowers bright,
With choicest gems 't was all inwrought
Of truth and feeling; in my sight
It seemed a spot or cloudless light.

III.

Yet when I made my offering there,
Like Cain's, the incense would not rise;
Back on my heart down-sank the prayer,
And altar-stone and sacrifice
Grew hateful in my tear-dimmed eyes.

IV,

O'er-grown with age's mosses green,
The little altar firmly stands;
It is not, as it once hath been,
A selfish shrine;—these time-taught hands
Bring incense now from many lands.

V.

Knowledge doth only widen love;
The stream, that lone and narrow rose,
Doth, deepening ever, onward move,
And with an even current flows
Calmer and calmer to the close.

My Love.

VI.

The love, that in those early days
Girt round my spirit like a wall,
Hath faded like a morning haze,
And flames, unpent by self's mean thrall,
Rise clearly to the perfect ALL.

MY LOVE.

I.

NOT as all other women are
Is she that to my soul is dear ;
Her glorious fancies come from far
Beneath the silver evening-star,
And yet her heart is ever near.

II.

Great feelings hath she of her own
Which lesser souls may never know ;
God giveth them to her alone,
And sweet they are as any tone
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

III.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,
Although no home were half so fair ;
No simplest duty is forgot,
Life hath no dim and lonely spot
That doth not in her sunshine share.

IV.

She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise,
For naught that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemed in her eyes.

V.

She hath no scorn of common things
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth.

VI.

Blessing she is: God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless.

VII.

She is most fair, and thereunto
Her life doth rightly harmonize;
Feeling or thought that was not true
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

VIII.

On Nature she doth muse and brood
With such a still and love-clear eye—
She is so gentle and so good—
The very flowers in the wood
Do bless her with their sympathy.

IX.

She is a woman: one in whom
The spring-time of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
For many blights and many tears.

X.

And youth in her a home will find,
Where he may dwell eternally;
Her soul is not of that weak kind
Which better love the life behind
Than that which is, or is to be.

XI.

I love her with a love as still
As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,
Goes wandering at its own will.
And yet doth ever flow aright.

With a Pressed Flower.

XII.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,
 Like quiet isles my duties lie;
 It flows around them and between,
 And makes them fresh and fair and green
 Sweet homes wherein to live and die.

WITH A PRESSED FLOWER.

THIS little flower from afar
 Hath come from other lands to thine;
 For, once, its white and drooping star
 Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

Perchance some fair-haired German maid
 Hath plucked one from the self-same stalk,
 And numbered over, half afraid,
 Its petals in her evening walk.

“He loves me, loves me not,” she cries;
 “He loves me more than earth or Heaven,”
 And then glad tears have filled her eyes
 To find the number was uneven.

So, Love, my heart doth wander forth
 To farthest lands beyond the sea,
 And search the fairest spots of earth
 To find sweet flowers of thought for thee.

A type this tiny blossom is
 Of what my heart doth every day,
 Seeking for pleasant fantasies
 To brood upon when thou 'rt away.

And thou must count its petals well,
 Because it is a gift from me;
 And the last one of all shall tell
 Something I've often told to thee.

But here at home, where we were born,
 Thou wilt find flowers just as true,
 Down bending every summer morn
 With freshness of New England dew.



" 'HE LOVES ME, LOVES ME NOT,' SHE CRIES."

Impartiality.

For Nature, ever right in love,
Hath given them the same sweet tongue,
Whether with German skies above,
Or here our granite rocks among.

IMPARTIALITY.

I.

I CANNOT say a scene is fair
Because it is beloved of thee,
But I shall love to linger there,
For sake of thy dear memory;
I would not be so coldly just
As to love only what I must.

II.

I cannot say a thought is good
Because thou foundest joy in it;
Each soul must choose its proper food
Which Nature hath decreed most fit;
But I shall ever deem it so
Because it made thy heart o'erflow.

III.

I love thee for that thou art fair;
And that thy spirit joys in aught
Createth a new beauty there,
With thine own dearest image fraught;
And love, for others' sake that springs,
Gives half their charm to lovely things.

BELLEROPHON.

DEDICATED TO MY FRIEND, JOHN F. HEATH.

I.

I FEEL the bandages unroll
That bound my inward seeing;
Freed are the bright wings of my soul,
Types of my God-like being;
High thoughts are swelling in my heart.
And rushing through my brain;
May I never more lose part

In my soul's realm again!
 All things fair, where'er they be,
 In earth or air, in sky or sea,
 I have loved them all, and taken
 All within my throbbing breast;
 No more my spirit can be shaken
 From its calm and kingly rest!
 Love hath shed its light around me,
 Love hath pierced the shades that bound me;
 Mine eyes are opened, I can see
 The universe's mystery,
 The mighty heart and core
 Of After and Before
 I see, and I am weak no more!

II.

Upward! upward evermore,
 To Heaven's open gate I soar!
 Little thoughts are far behind me,
 Which when custom weaves together,
 All the nobler man can tether—
 Cobwebs now no more can bind me!
 Now fold thy wings a little while,
 My tranced soul, and lie
 At rest on this Calypso-isle
 That floats in mellow sky,
 A thousand isles with gentle
 motion
 Rock upon the sunset ocean;
 A thousand isles of thousand hues,
 How bright! how beautiful! how
 rare!
 Into my spirit they infuse
 A purer, a diviner air;
 The earth is growing dimmer,
 And now the last faint glimmer
 Hath faded from the hill;
 But in my higher atmosphere
 The sunlight streameth red and
 clear,
 Fringing the islets still;—
 Love lifts us to the sunlight,
 Though the whole world would be dark;
 Love, wide Love, is the *one* light,
 All else is but a fading spark;



"AND NOW THE LAST FAINT GLIMMER
 HATH FADED FROM THE HILL."

Bellerophon.

Love is the nectar which doth fill
 Our soul's cup even to overflowing,
 And, warming heart, and thought, and will,
 Doth lie within us mildly glowing,
 From its own centre raying out
 Beauty and Truth on all without.

III.

Each on his golden throne,
 Full royally, alone,
 I see the stars above me,
 With sceptre and with diadem;
 Mildly they look down and love me,
 For I have ever yet loved them.
 I see their ever-sleepless eyes
 Watching the growth of destinies;
 Calm, sedate,
 The eyes of Fate,
 They wink not, nor do roll,
 But search the depths of soul—
 And in those mighty depths they see
 The germs of all Futurity,
 Waiting but the fitting time
 To burst and ripen into prime,
 As in the womb of mother Earth
 The seeds of plants and forests lie
 Age upon age and never die—
 So in the souls of all men wait,
 Undyingly the seeds of Fate;
 Chance breaks the clod and forth they spring,
 Filling blind men with wondering.
 Eternal stars! with holy awe,
 As if a present God I saw,
 I look into those mighty eyes
 And see great destinies arise,
 As in those of mortal men
 Feelings glow and fade again!
 All things below, all things above,
 Are open to the eyes of Love.

IV.

Of Knowledge Love is master-key,
 Knowledge of Beauty; passing dear
 Is each to each, and mutually
 Each one doth make the other clear;

Beauty is Love, and what we love
 Straightway is beautiful,
 So is the circle round and full,
 And so Love doth live and move

And have his being,
 Finding his proper food
 By sure inseeing,
 In all things pure and good,
 Which he at will doth cull.

Like a joyous butterfly
 Hiving in the sunny bowers
 Of the soul's fairest flowers,
 Or, between the earth and sky,
 Wandering at liberty
 For happy, happy hours!



"SHEDDING A MILD AND GOLDEN LIGHT
 ON THE SHADOWY FACE OF NIGHT."

V.

The thoughts of Love are Poesy,
 As this fair earth and all we see
 Are the thoughts of Deity—
 And Love is ours by our birthright!
 He hath cleared mine inward sight,
 Glorious shapes with glorious eyes
 Round about my spirit glance,
 Shedding a mild and golden light
 On the shadowy face of Night;
 To unearthly melodies,
 Hand in hand, they weave their dance,
 While a deep, ambrosial lustre
 From their rounded limbs doth shine,

Something Natural.

Through many a rich and golden cluster
 Of streaming hair divine,
 In our gross and earthly hours
 We cannot see the Love-given powers
 Which ever round the soul await
 To do its sovereign will,
 When, in its moments calm and still,
 It re-assumes its royal state,
 Nor longer sits with eyes downcast,
 A beggar, dreaming of the past,
 At its own palace-gate.

VI.

I too am a Maker and a Poet ;
 Through my whole soul I feel it and know it ;
 My veins are fired with ecstasy !
 All-mother Earth
 Did ne'er give birth
 To one who shall be matched with me ;
 The lustre of my coronal
 Shall cast a dimness over all. —
 Alas ! alas ! what have I spoken ?
 My strong, my eagle wings are broken,
 And back again to earth I fall !

SOMETHING NATURAL.

I.

WHEN first I saw thy soul-deep eyes,
 My heart yearned to thee instantly,
 Strange longing in my soul did rise ;
 I cannot tell the reason why,
 But I must love thee till I die.

II.

The sight of thee hath well-nigh grown
 As needful to me as the light ;
 I am unrestful when alone,
 And my heart doth not beat aright
 Except it dwell within thy sight.

III.

And yet—and yet—O selfish love !
 I am not happy even with thee ;

I see thee in thy brightness move,
And cannot well contented be,
Save thou should'st shine alone for me.

IV.

We should love beauty even as flowers—
For all, 't is said, they bud and blow,
'They are the world's as well as ours—
But thou—alas! God made thee grow
So fair, I cannot love thee so!

THE SIRENS.

THE sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,
The sea is restless and uneasy;
Thou seekest quiet, thou art weary.
Wandering thou knowest not whither;—
Our little isle is green and breezy,
Come and rest thee! O come hither,
Come to this peaceful home of ours,
Where evermore
The low west-wind creeps panting up the shore
To be at rest among the flowers;
Full of rest, the green moss lifts,
As the dark waves of the sea
Draw in and out of rocky rifts
Calling solemnly to thee,
With voices deep and hollow—
To the shore
Follow! O follow!
To be at rest for evermore!
For evermore!

Look how the gray, old Ocean
From the depths of his heart rejoices,
Heaving with a gentle motion,
When he hears our restful voices;
List how he sings in an undertone,
Chiming with our melody;
And all sweet sounds of earth and air
Melt into one low voice alone,
That murmurs over the weary sea—
And seems to sing from everywhere—
“Here mayest thou harbor peacefully,
Here mayest thou rest from the aching oar;



"TO THE SHORE FOLLOW! O FOLLOW!"

Turn thy curvèd prow ashore
And in our green isle rest for evermore !
For evermore !

And Echo half wakes in the wooded hill,
And, to her heart so calm and deep,
Murmurs over in her sleep,
Doubtfully pausing and murmuring still,
“ Evermore ! ”

Thus, on Life's weary sea,
Heareth the marinere
Voices sweet, from far and near,
Ever singing low and clear,
Ever singing longingly.

Is it not better here to be,
Than to be toiling late and soon ?
In the dreary night to see
Nothing but the blood-red moon
Go up and down into the sea ;
Or, in the loneliness of day,
To see the still seals only,
Solemnly lift their faces gray,
Making it yet more lonely ?
Is it not better, than to hear
Only the sliding of the wave
Beneath the plank, and feel so near
A cold and lonely grave,
A restless grave, where thou shalt lie
Even in death unquietly ?
Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark,
Lean over the side and see
The leaden eye of the side-long shark
Upturned patiently
Ever waiting there for thee :
Look down and see those shapeless forms,
Which ever keep their dreamless sleep
Far down within the gloomy deep
And only stir themselves in storms,
Rising like islands from beneath,
And snorting through the angry spray,
As the frail vessel perisheth
In the whirls of their unwieldly play ;
Look down ! Look down !
Upon the seaweed, slimy and dark,
That waves its arms so lank and brown,

Beckoning for thee!
 Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark
 Into the cold depth of the sea!
 Look down! Look down!
 Thus, on Life's lonely sea,
 Heareth the marinere
 Voices sad from far and near,
 Ever singing full of fear
 Ever singing drearily

Here all is pleasant as a dream;
 The wind scarce shaketh down the dew,
 The green grass floweth like a stream
 Into the ocean's blue:
 Listen! O listen!

Here is a gush of many streams,
 A song of many birds,
 And every wish and longing seems
 Lulled to a numbered flow of
 words—

Listen! O listen!

Here ever hum the golden bees
 Underneath full-blossomed trees,
 At once with glowing fruit and flower
 crowned;
 The sand is so smooth, the yellow sand,
 That thy keel will not grate, as it touches
 the land;
 All around, with a slumberous sound,
 The singing waves slide up the strand,
 And there, where the smooth wet pebbles
 be,
 The waters gurgle longingly,
 As if they fain would seek the shore,
 To be at rest from the ceaseless roar,
 To be at rest for evermore—

For evermore.

Thus on Life's gloomy sea,
 Heareth the marinere
 Voices sweet, far and near,
 Ever singing in his ear,
 Here is rest and peace for thee!"



"THAT THY KEEL WILL NOT GRATE
 AS IT TOUCHES THE LAND."

A FEELING.

THE flowers and the grass to me
Are eloquent reproachfully ;
For would they wave so pleasantly
Or look so fresh and fair,
If a man, cunning, hollow, mean,
Or one in anywise unclean,
Were looking on them there ?

No ; he hath grown so foolish-wise
He cannot see with childhood's eyes ;
He hath forgot that purity
And lowliness which are the key
Of Nature's mysteries ;
No ; he hath wandered off so long
From his own place of birth,
That he hath lost his mother-tongue,
And, like one come from far-off lands,
Forgetting and forgot, he stands
Beside his mother's hearth.

THE BEGGAR.

A BEGGAR through the world am I,
From place to place I wander by ;—
Fill up my pilgrim's script for me,
For Christ's sweet sake and charity !

A little of thy steadfastness,
Rounded with leafy gracefulness,
Old oak, give me—
That the world's blasts may round me blow,
And I yield gently to and fro,
While my stout-hearted trunk below
And firm-set roots unmoved be.

Some of thy stern, unyielding might,
Enduring still through day and night
Rude tempest-shock and withering blight—
That I may keep at bay
The changeful April sky of chance
And the strong tide of circumstance—
Give me old granite gray.

Serenade.

Some of thy mournfulness serene,
 Some of thy never-dying green,
 Put in this script of mine—
 That griefs may fall like snowflakes light,
 And deck me in a robe of white
 Ready to be an angel bright—
 O sweetly-mournful pine.

A little of thy merriment,
 Of thy sparkling, light content,
 Give me my cheerful brook—
 That i may still be full of glee
 And gladsomeness, where'er I be,
 Though fickle fate hath prisoned me
 In some neglected nook.

Ye have been very kind and good
 To me, since I've been in the wood;
 Ye have gone nigh to fill my heart,
 But good-by, kind friends, every one,
 I've far to go ere set of sun;
 Of all good things I would have part,
 The day was high ere I could start,
 And so my journey 's scarce begun.

Heaven help me! how could I forget
 To beg of thee, dear violet!
 Some of thy modesty,
 That flowers here as well, unseen,
 As if before the world thou 'dst been,
 O give, to strengthen me.

SERENADE.

FROM the close-shut windows gleams no spark,
 The night is chilly, the night is dark,
 The poplars shiver, the pine-trees moan,
 My hair by the autumn breeze is blown,
 Under thy window I sing alone,
 Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

The darkness is pressing coldly around,
 The windows shake with a lonely sound,
 The stars are hid and the night is drear,
 The heart of silence throbs in thine ear,



"UNDER THY WINDOW I SING ALONE."

In thy chamber thou sittest alone,
Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

The world is happy, the world is wide,
Kind hearts are beating on every side;
Ah, why should we lie so curled
Alone in the shell of this great world?
Why should we any more be alone?
Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

O! 't is a bitter and dreary word,
The saddest by man's ear ever heard;
We each are young, we each have a heart,
Why stand we ever coldly apart?
Must we forever, then, be alone?
Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

IRENE.

HERS is a spirit deep and crystal-clear;
Calmly beneath her earnest face it lies,
Free without boldness, meek without a fear,
Quicker to look than speak its sympathies;
Far down into her large and patient eyes
I gaze, deep-drinking of the infinite,
As, in the mid-watch of a clear, still night,
I look into the fathomless blue skies.

So circled lives she with Love's holy light,
That from the shade of self she walketh free;
The garden of her soul still keepeth she
An Eden where the snake did never enter;
She hath a natural, wise sincerity,
A simple truthfulness, and these have lent her
A dignity as moveless as the centre;
So that no influence of earth can stir
Her steadfast courage, or can take away
The holy peacefulness, which, night and day,
Unto her queenly soul doth minister.

Most gentle is she; her large charity
(An all unwitting, childlike gift in her)
Not freer is to give than meek to bear;
And, though herself not unacquaint with care,
Hath in her heart wide room for all that be—

Her heart that hath no secrets of its own,
But open is as eglantine full-blown,

Cloudless forever is her brow serene,
Speaking calm hope and trust within her, whence
Welleth a noiseless spring of patience
That keepeth all her life so fresh, so green
And full of holiness, that every look,
The greatness of her woman's soul revealing,
Unto me bringeth blessing, and a feeling
As when I read in God's own holy book.

A graciousness in giving that doth make
The small'st gift greatest, and a sense most meek
Of worthiness, that doth not fear to take
From others, but which always fears to speak
Its thanks in utterance, for the giver's sake;—
The deep religion of a thankful heart,
Which rests instinctively with Heaven's law
With a full peace, that never can depart
From its own steadfastness;—a holy awe
For holy things, not those which men call holy,
But such as are revealèd to the eyes
Of a true woman's soul bent down and lowly
Before the face of daily mysteries;—
A love that blossoms soon, but ripens slowly
To the full goldenness of fruitful prime.
Enduring with a firmness that defies
All shallow tricks of circumstance and time,
By a sure insight knowing where to cling,
And where it clingeth never withering—
These are Irene's dowry—which no fate
Can shake from their serene, deep-built state.

In-seeing sympathy is hers, which chasteneth
No less than loveth, scorning to be bound
With fear of blame, and yet which ever hasteneth
To pour the balm of kind looks on the wound,
If they be wounds which such sweet teaching makes,
Giving itself a pang for others' sakes;
No want of faith, that chills with side-long eye,
Hath she; no jealousy, no Levite pride
That passeth by upon the other side;
For in her soul there never dwelt a lie,
Right from the hand of God her spirit came
Unstained, and she hath ne'er forgotten whence,

The Lost Child.

It came, nor wandered far from thence,
But laboreth to keep her still the same,
Near to her place of birth, that she may not
Soil her white raiment with an earthly spot.

Yet sets she not her soul so steadily
Above, that she forgets her ties to earth,
But her whole thought would almost seem to be
How to make glad one lowly human hearth;
For with a gentle courage she doth strive
In thought and word and feeling so to live
As to make earth next Heaven; and her heart
Herein doth show its most exceeding worth,
That, bearing in our frailty her just part,
She hath not shrunk from evils of this life,
But hath gone calmly forth into the strife,
And all its sins and sorrows hath withstood
With lofty strength of patient womanhood;
For this I love her great soul more than all,
That, being bound, like us, with earthly thrall,
She walks so bright and Heaven-wise therein—
Too wise, too meek, too womanly to sin.

Exceeding pleasant to mine eyes is she;
Like a lone star through riven storm-clouds seen
By sailors, tempest-tost upon the sea,
Telling of rest and peaceful heavens nigh,
Unto my soul her star-like soul hath been,
Her sight as full of hope and calm to me;—
For she unto herself hath builded high
A home serene, wherein to lay her head,
Earth's noblest thing—a Woman perfected.

THE LOST CHILD.

I.

I WANDERED down the sunny glade
And ever mused, my love, of thee;
My thoughts, like little children, played,
As gayly and as guilelessly.

II.

If any chanced to go astray,
Moaning in fear of coming harms,

Hope brought the wanderer back alway,
Safe nestled in her snowy arms.

III.

From that soft nest the happy one
Looked up at me and calmly smiled;
Its hair shone golden in the sun,
And made it seem a heavenly child.

IV.

Dear Hope's blue eyes smiled mildly down,
And blest it with a love so deep,
That, like a nursling of her own,
It clasped her neck and fell asleep.

THE CHURCH.

I.

I LOVE the rites of England's church
I love to hear and see
The priest and people reading slow
The solemn Litany;
I love to hear the glorious swell
Of chanted psalm and prayer,
And the deep organ's bursting heart,
Throb through the shivering air.

II.

Chants, that a thousand years have heard,
I love to hear again,
For visions of the olden time
Are wakened by the strain;
With gorgeous hues the window-glass
Seems suddenly to glow,
And rich and red the streams of light
Down through the chancel flow.

III.

And then I murmur, "Surely God
Delighteth here to dwell;
This is the temple of his Son
Whom he doth love so well;"



"THE PRIEST AND PEOPLE READING SLOW
THE SOLEMN LITANY."

But, when I hear the creed which saith,
 This church alone is his,
 I feel within my soul that he
 Hath purer shrines than this.

IV.

For His is not the builded church,
 Nor organ-shaken dome;
 In everything that lovely is
 He loves and hath his home;
 And most in soul that loveth well
 All things which he hath made,
 Knowing no creed but simple faith
 That may not be gainsaid.

V.

His church is universal Love,
 And whoso dwells therein
 Shall need no customary sacrifice
 To wash away his sin;
 And music in its aisles shall swell,
 Of lives upright and true,
 Sweet as dreamed sounds of angel-harps
 Down-quivering through the blue.

VI.

They shall not ask a litany,
 The souls that worship there,
 But every look shall be a hymn,
 And every word a prayer;
 Their service shall be written bright
 In calm and holy eyes,
 And every day from fragrant hearts
 Fit incense shall arise.

THE UNLOVELY.

THE pretty things that others wear
 Look strange and out of place on me,
 I never seem dressed tastefully,
 Because I am not fair;

The Unlovely.

And, when I would most pleasing seem,
And deck myself with joyful care,
I find it is an idle dream,
Because I am not fair.

If I put roses in my hair,
They bloom as if in mockery;
Nature denies her sympathy,
Because I am not fair;
Alas! I have a warm, true heart,
But when I show it people stare;
I must forever dwell apart,
Because I am not fair.

I am least happy being where
The hearts of others are most light,
And strive to keep me out of sight,
Because I am not fair;
The glad ones often give a glance,
As I am sitting lonely there,
That asks me why I do not dance—
Because I am not fair.

And if to smile on them I dare,
For that my heart with love runs o'er.
They say: "What *is* she laughing for?"—
Because I am not fair;
Love scorned or misinterpreted—
It is the hardest thing to bear;
I often wish that I were dead,
Because I am not fair.

In joy or grief I must not share,
For neither smiles nor tears on me
Will ever look becomingly,
Because I am not fair;
Whole days I sit alone and cry,
And in my grave I wish I were—
Yet none will weep me if I die,
Because I am not fair.

My grave will be so lone and bare,
I fear to think of those dark hours,
For none will plant it o'er with flowers,
Because I am not fair;



"THE GLAD ONES OFTEN GIVE A GLANCE,
AS I AM SITTING LONELY THERE."

Love=Song.

They will not in the summer come
 And speak kind words above me there;
 To me the grave will be no home,
 Because I am not fair.

LOVE-SONG.

NEARER to thy mother-heart,
 Simple Nature, press me,
 Let me know thee as thou art,
 Fill my soul and bless me!
 I have loved thee long and well,
 I have loved thee heartily;
 Shall I never with thee dwell,
 Never be at one with thee?

Inward, inward to thy heart,
 Kindly Nature, take me,
 Lovely even as thou art,
 Full of loving make me!
 Thou knowest naught of dead-cold forms
 Knowest naught of littleness,
 Lifeful Truth thy being warms,
 Majesty and earnestness.

Homeward, homeward to thy heart,
 Dearest Nature, call me;
 Let no halfness, no mean part,
 Any longer thrall me!
 I will be thy lover true,
 Will be a faithful soul,
 Then circle me, then look me through,
 Fill me with the mighty Whole.

SONG.

ALL things are sad:—
 I go and ask of Memory,
 That she tell sweet tales to me
 To make me glad;
 And she takes me by the hand,
 Leadeth to old places,
 Showeth the old faces
 In her hazy mirage-land;

O, her voice is sweet and low,
 And her eyes are fresh to mine
 As the dew
 Gleaming through
 The half-unfolded eglantine,
 Long ago, long ago!
 But I feel that I am only
 Yet more sad, and yet more lonely!

Then I turn to blue-eyed Hope,
 And beg of her that she will ope
 Her golden gates for me;
 She is fair and full of grace,
 But she hath the form and face
 Of her mother Memory;
 Clear as air her glad voice ringeth
 Joyous are the songs she singeth,



“SCATTERING MY WAY WITH FLOWERS.”

Yet I hear them mournfully;—
 They are songs her mother taught her,
 Crooning to her infant daughter,
 As she lay upon her knee.
 Many little ones she bore me,
 Woe is me! in by-gone hours,
 Who danced along and sang before me.
 Scattering my way with flowers;
 One by one
 They are gone,
 And their silent graves are seen,
 Shining fresh with mosses green,
 Where the rising sunbeams slope
 O'er the dewy land of Hope.

But, when sweet Memory faileth,
 And Hope looks strange and cold;

A Love=Dream.

When youth no more availeth,
 And Grief grows over bold ;—
 When softest winds are dreary,
 And summer sunlight weary,
 And sweetest things uncheery
 We know not why :—
 When the crown of our desires
 Weighs upon the brow and tires,
 And we would die,
 Die for, ah ! we know not what,
 Something we seem to have forgot,
 Something we had, and now have not ; —
 When the present is a weight
 And the future seems our foe,
 And with shrinking eyes we wait,
 As one who dreads a sudden blow
 In the dark, he knows not whence ;—
 When Love at last his bright eye closes.
 And the bloom upon his face,
 That lends him such a living grace,
 Is a shadow from the roses
 Wherewith we have decked his bier,
 Because he once was passing dear ;—
 When we feel a leaden sense
 Of nothingness and impotence,
 Till we grow mad—
 Then the body saith,
 “ There’s but one true faith ;
 All things are sad ! ”

A LOVE-DREAM.

PLEASANT thoughts come wandering,
 When thou art far, from thee to me ;
 On their silvery wings they bring
 A very peaceful ecstasy,
 A feeling of eternal spring ;
 So that Winter half forgets
 Everything but that thou art,
 And, in his bewildered heart,
 Dreameth of the Violets,
 Or those bluer flowers that ope,
 Flowers of steadfast love and hope,
 Watered by the living wells,
 Of memories dear, and dearer prophecies,

Where young spring forever dwells
In the sunshine of thine eyes.
I have most holy dreams of thee,
All night I have such dreams ;
And when I wake, reality
No whit the darker seems ;
Through the twin gates of Hope and Memory
They pour in crystal streams
From out an angel's calmèd eyes,
Who, from twilight till sunrise,
Far away in the upper deep,
Poised upon his shining wings,
Over us his watch doth keep,
And, as he watcheth, ever sings.

Through the still night I hear him sing,
Down-looking on our sleep ;
I hear his clear, clear harp-strings ring,
And as the golden notes take wing,
Gently downward hovering,
For very joy I weep ;
He singeth songs of holy Love,
That quiver through the depths afar,
Where the blessèd spirits are,
And lingeringly from above
Shower till the morning star
His silver shield hath buckled on
And sentinels the dawn alone,
Quivering his gleamy spear
Though the dusky atmosphere.

Almost, my love, I fear the morn,
When that blessèd voice shall cease,
Lest it should leave me quite forlorn,
Stript of my snowy robe of peace ;
And yet the bright reality
Is fairer than all dreams can be,
For, through my spirit, all day long
Ring echoes of that angel-song
In melodious thoughts of thee ;
And well I know it cannot die
Till eternal morn shall break,
For, through life's slumber, thou and I
Will keep it for each other's sake
And it shall not be silent when we wake.

Fourth of July Ode.

FOURTH OF JULY ODE.

I.

OUR fathers fought for Liberty
 They struggled long and well,
 History of their deeds can tell—
 But did they leave us free ?

II

Are we free from vanity,
 Free from pride, and free from self,
 Free from love of power and pelf,
 From everything that's beggarly ?

III.

Are we free from stubborn will,
 From low hate and malice small,
 From opinion's tyrant thrall ?
 Are none of us our own slaves still ?

IV.

Are we free to speak our thought,
 To be happy, and be poor,
 Free to enter Heaven's door,
 To live and labor as we ought ?

V.

Are we then made free at last
 From the fear of what men say,
 Free to reverence To-day,
 From the slavery of the Past ?

VI.

Our fathers fought for liberty,
 They struggled long and well,
 History of their deeds can tell—
 But *ourselves* must set us free.

 SPHINX.

I.

WHY mourn we for the golden prime
 When our young souls *were* kingly, strong, and true ?
 The soul is greater than all time,
 It changes not, but yet is ever new.

II.

But that the soul *is* noble, we
 Could never know what nobleness had been;
 Be what ye dream! and earth shall see
 A greater greatness than she e'er hath seen.

III.

The flower pines not to be fair,
 It never asketh to be sweet and dear,
 But gives itself to sun and air,
 And so is fresh and full from year to year.

IV.

Nothing in Nature weeps its lot,
 Nothing, save man, abides in memory,
 Forgetful that the Past is what
 Ourselves may choose the coming time to be.

V.

All things are circular; the Past
 Was given to make the Future great;
 And the void Future shall at last
 Be the strong rudder of an after fate.

VI.

We sit beside the Sphinx of Life,
 We gaze into its void, unanswering eyes,
 And spend ourselves in idle strife
 To read the riddle of their mysteries.

VII.

Arise! be earnest and be strong!
 The Sphinx's eyes shall suddenly grow clear,
 And speak as plain to thee ere long,
 As the dear maiden's who holds thee most dear.

VIII.

The meaning of all things in *us*—
 Yea, in the lives we give our souls—doth lie;
 Make, then, their meaning glorious
 By such a life as need not fear to die!

IX.

There is no heart-beat in the day,
 Which bears a record of the smallest deed,
 But holds within its faith alway
 That which in doubt we vainly strive to read.

A Prayer.

X.

One seed contains another seed,
And that a third, and so for evermore;
And promise of as great a deed
Lies folded in the deed that went before.

XI.

So ask not fitting space or time,
Yet could not dream of things which could not be
Each day shall make the next sublime,
And Time be swallowed in Eternity.

XII.

God bless the Present! it is ALL;
It has been Future, and it shall be Past;
Awake and live! thy strength recall,
And in one trinity unite them fast.

XIII.

Action and Life—lo! here the key
Of all on earth that seemeth dark and wrong;
Win this—and with it, freely ye
May enter that bright realm for which ye long.

XIV.

Then all these bitter questionings
Shall with a full and blessed answer meet;
Past worlds, whereof the Poet sings,
Shall be the earth beneath his snow-white fleet.

A PRAYER.

GOD! do not let my loved one die,
But rather wait until the time
That I am grown in purity
Enough to enter thy pure clime,
Then take me, I will gladly go,
So that my love remain below!

O, let her stay! She is by birth
What I through death must learn to be,
We need her more on our poor earth,
Than thou canst need in heaven with thee:
She hath her wings already, I
Must burst this earth-shell ere I fly.

Then, God, take me! We shall be near,
 More near than ever, each to each:
 Her angel ears will find more clear
 My heavenly than my earthly speech;
 And still, as I draw nigh to thee,
 Her soul and mine shall closer be.

1841.

FANTASY.

ROUND and round me she waved swinging,
 Like a wreath of smoke,
 In a clear, low gurgle singing
 What may ne'er be spoke;
 Her white arms floated on the air,
 Like swans upon a stream.
 So stately fair, beyond compare,



"ROUND AND ROUND ME SHE WAVED SWINGING,
 LIKE A WREATH OF SMOKE."

Their gracefulness did seem,
 And I knew, by the splendor of her hair,
 That all must be a dream;
 For round her limbs it went and came,
 Hither and thither,
 I knew not whither,
 Fitfully like a wind-waved flame—
 But bright and golden as flame was never,—
 And it flowed back and forth,
 Like the lights of the north,
 Round her and round her forever and ever!

The Heritage.

She filled the cup of melody
 With madness to the brim,
 And wild, wild songs she sang to me
 That made my brain grow dim,
 Like those that throng the traveler's mind,
 When night drops down before and behind,
 And he can hear nought but the lonely wind
 In the bleak pines over him :
 How may I tell
 The sea-like swell
 Of ever-growing melody,
 That drifted her words,
 Like white sea-birds,
 Swinging and heaving on to me ?

Her song came like a sudden breeze ;
 It wound through my heart
 With a flashing dart,
 As a bird winds through the trees ;
 'T was like a brook flowing.
 'T was like a wind blowing.
 'T was like a star and like a river,
 'T was like all things that weary never,—
 It rhymed with the grass and the open sky,
 With a billowy roll,
 It flooded my soul,
 And thrilled it with fearful ecstasy ;
 It was calm as music e'er can be,
 But an inward might was in its motion,
 A consciousness of majesty,
 Like the heart of the unruffled ocean,
 Which, clear and still, by breeze unshent,
 With a world-wide throe,
 Heaves to and fro.
 From continent to continent.

1842.

 THE HERITAGE.

THE rich man's son inherits lands,
 And piles of brick, and stone and gold,
 And he inherits soft, white hands,
 And tender flesh that fears the cold,
 Nor dares to wear a garment old ;

A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares ;
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,
And soft, white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare ;
With sated heart, he hears the pants
Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easy-chair ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a hardier spirit ;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,
A rank adjudged by toil-worn merit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labor sings !
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?
A patience learned of being poor,
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,
A fellow-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

O, rich man's son ! there is a toil,
That with all others level stands ;
Large charity doth never soil,



"STOUT MUSCLES AND A SINEWY HEART,
A HARDY FRAME, A HARDIER SPIRIT."

But only whiten, soft white hands,
This is the best crop from thy lands;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O, poor man's son! scorn not thy state;
There is worse weariness than thine,
In merely being rich and great;
Toil only gives the soul to shine,
And makes rest fragrant and benign;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last;
Both, children of the same dear God,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.

THE ROSE: A BALLAD.

I.

IN his tower sat the poet
Gazing on the roaring sea.
"Take this rose," he sighed, and throw it
Where there's none that loveth me.
On the rock the billow bursteth
And sinks back into the seas,
But in vain my spirit thirsteth
So to burst and be at ease.
Take, O, sea! the tender blossom
That hath lain against my breast;
On thy black and angry bosom
It will find a surer rest.
Life is vain, and love is hollow,
Ugly death stands there behind,
Hate and scorn and hunger follow
Him that toileth for his kind."
Forth into the night he hurled it,
And with bitter smile did mark
How the surly tempest whirled it
Swift into the hungry dark.

The Rose : A Ballad.

Foam and spray drive back to leeward,
 And the gale, with dreary moan,
 Drifts the helpless blossom seaward,
 Through the breakers all alone.

II.

Stands a maiden, on the morrow,
 Musing by the wave-beat strand,
 Half in hope and half in sorrow,
 Tracing words upon the sand :
 " Shall I ever then behold him
 Who hath been my life so long,—
 Ever to this sick heart fold him,—
 Be the spirit of his song ?
 Touch not, sea, the blessed letters
 I have traced upon thy shore,
 Spare his name whose spirit fetters
 Mine with love forevermore ?"
 Swells the tide and overflows it,
 But with omen pure and meet,
 Brings a little rose and throws, it
 Humbly at the maiden's feet.
 Full of bliss she takes the token,
 And, upon her snowy breast,
 Soothes the ruffled petals broken
 With the ocean's fierce unrest.
 " Love is thine, O, heart ! and surely
 Peace shall also be thine own,
 For the heart that trusteth purely
 Never long can pine alone."

III.

In his tower sits the poet,
 Blissess new and strange to him
 Fill his heart and overflow it
 With a wonder sweet and dim.
 Up the beach the ocean slideth
 With a whisper of delight,
 And the moon in silence glideth
 Through the peaceful blue of night,
 Rippling o'er the poet's shoulder
 Flows a maiden's golden hair,
 Maiden-lips, with love grown bolder,
 Kiss his moon-lit forehead bare,
 " Life is joy, and love is power,
 Death all fetters doth unbind,



"AND, UPON HER SNOWY BREAST,
SOOTHES THE RUFFLED PETALS BROKEN."

Elegy on Dr. Channing.

Strength and wisdom only flower
 When we toil for all our kind.
 Hope is truth,—the future giveth
 More than present takes away,
 And the soul forever liveth
 Nearer God from day to day."
 Not a word the maiden uttered,
 Fullest hearts are slow to speak,
 But a withered roseleaf fluttered
 Down upon the poet's cheek.

1842.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DR. CHANNING.

I DO not come to weep above thy pall,
 And mourn the dying out of noble powers;
 The poet's clearer eye should see in all
 Earth's seeming woe the seed of Heaven's flowers.

Truth needs no champions: in the infinite deep
 Of everlasting Soul her life abides,
 From Nature's heart her mighty pulses leap,
 Through Nature's veins, her strength, undying, tides.

Peace is more strong than war, and gentleness,
 Where force were vain, makes conquests o'er the wave;
 And love lives on and hath a power to bless,
 When they who loved are hidden in the grave.

The sculptured marble brags of death-strewn fields,
 And Glory's epitaph is writ in blood;
 But Alexander now to Plato yields,
 Clarkson will stand where Wellington hath stood.

I watch the circle of the eternal years,
 And read forever in the storied page
 One lengthened roll of blood, and wrong, and tears,
 One onward step of Truth from age to age.

The poor are crushed; the tyrants link their chain;
 The poet sings through narrow dungeon-grates;
 Man's hope lies quenched;—and lo! with steadfast gain
 Freedom doth forge her mail of adverse fates.

Men slay the prophets ; fagot, rack and cross
 Make up the groaning record of the past ;
 But Evil's triumphs are her endless loss,
 And sovereign Beauty wins the soul at last.

No power can die that ever wrought for Truth ;
 Thereby a law of Nature it became,
 And lives unwithered in its sinewy youth,
 When he who called it forth is but a name.

Therefore I cannot think thee wholly gone ;
 The better part of thee is with us still ;
 Thy soul its hampering clay aside hath thrown,
 And only freer wrestles with the Ill.

Thou livest in the life of all good things ;
 What words thou spak'st for Freedom shall not die ;
 Thou sleepest not, for now thy Love hath wings
 To soar where hence thy Hope could hardly fly.

And often, from that other world, on this
 Some gleams from great souls gone before may shine,
 To shed on struggling hearts a clearer bliss,
 And clothe the Right with lustre more divine.

Thou art not idle : in thy higher sphere
 Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,
 And strength, to perfect what is dreamed of here,
 Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

For sure, in Heaven's wide chambers, there is room
 For love and pity, and for helpful deeds ;
 Else were our summons thither but a doom
 To life more vain than this in clayey weeds.

From off the starry mountain-peak of song,
 Thy spirit shows me, in the coming time,
 An earth unwithered by the foot of wrong,
 A race revering its own soul sublime.

What wars, what martyrdoms, what crimes may come
 Thou knowest not, nor I ; but God will lead
 The prodigal soul from want and sorrow home,
 And Eden ope her gates to Adam's seed.

Farewell! good man, good angel now! this hand
 Soon, like thine own, shall lose its cunning, too;
 Soon shall this soul, like thine, bewildered stand,
 Then leap to thread the free, unfathomed blue:

When that day comes, O, may this hand grow cold,
 Busy, like thine, for Freedom and the Right;
 O, may this soul, like thine, be ever bold
 To face dark Slavery's encroaching blight!

This laurel-leaf I cast upon thy bier;
 Let worthier hands than these thy wreath entwine;



"THIS LAUREL-LEAF I CAST UPON THY BIER."

Upon thy hearse I shed no useless tear,—
 For me weep rather thou in calm divine!

1842.

STANZAS.

SUNG AT THE ANTI-SLAVERY PICNIC IN DEDHAM, ON THE
 ANNIVERSARY OF WEST-INDIA EMANCIPATION,
 AUGUST 1, 1843.

MEN! whose boast it is that ye
 Come of fathers brave and free,
 If there breathe on earth a slave,
 Are ye truly free and brave?
 If ye do not feel the chain,
 When it works a brother's pain,
 Are ye not base slaves indeed,—
 Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Women! who shall one day bear
 Sons to breathe New England air,
 If ye hear without a blush,
 Deeds to make the roused blood rush

Like red lava through your veins,
For your sisters now in chains,—
Answer! are ye fit to be
Mothers of the brave and free?

Is true Freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

SILENCE.

WHEN the cup of hope brims over
And the soul has drunk its fill,
When the loved-one meets the lover
And their hearts in sunshine hover
With one impulse and one will,—
Then the useless tongue is still.

When the heart is bare of gladness,
And the helpless sense of ill
Goads the apathy of sadness
Onward, through a whirl of madness
To a darkness drear and chill,—
Then the palsied tongue is still.

When the soul for power sigheth,
Struggling for Art's fuller skill,
And the prophet heart o'erflieth
All the agony that trieth,
All the teardrops it must spill,—
When the tranced tongue is still.

A Chippewa Legend.

When two hearts that love are parted,
 And truth lingers but to kill,
 When they strive to be hardhearted.
 And the props of life are started
 With a terror and a thrill,—
 Then the choking tongue is still.

When our souls youth's dream-chains shiver,
 And we leap the world's scant rill,
 Which had seemed a mighty river
 Roaring on and on forever
 'Tween us and Self-trust's steep hill,
 Then the trembling tongue is still.

O, sweet Silence! they belied thee
 Who have called thee vain and weak;
 Speech is emptiness beside thee,
 Joy and woe have glorified thee,
 Love and longing never seek
 Any better way to speak.

All the deepest thoughts and feelings
 Which the roots of life enfold,
 Passion's sudden shocks and reelings,
 Love's first tremulous revealings,
 Never can be fully told,
 Save by the, revered of old!

A CHIPPEWA LEGEND.*

*ἀλγεινὰ μὲν μοι καὶ λέγειν ἐστὶν τάδε
 ἄλγος δὲ σιγᾶν.*

Æschylus, *Prom. Vinet.*, 197.

THE old Chief, feeling now well-nigh his end,
 Called his two eldest children to his side,
 And gave them, in few words, his parting charge:
 "My son and daughter, me ye see no more;
 The happy hunting-grounds await me, green
 With change of spring and summer through the year:
 But, for remembrance, after I am gone,
 Be kind to little Sheemah for my sake:
 Weakling he is and young, and knows not yet

* For the leading incidents in this tale, I am indebted to the very valuable "Algie Researches" of Henry R. Schoolcraft, Esq.

To set the trap, or draw the seasoned bow;
Therefore of both your loves he hath more need,
And he who needeth love, to love hath right;
It is not like our furs and stores of corn,
Whereto we claim sole title by our toil.
But the Great Spirit plants it in our hearts.
And waters it and gives it sun, to be
The common stock and heritage of all:
Therefore be kind to Sheemah, that yourselves
May not be left deserted in your need."

Alone beside a lake, their wigwam stood,
Far from the other dwellings of their tribe;
And after many moons, the loneliness
Wearied the elder brother, and he said,
"Why should I dwell here all alone, shut out
From the free, natural joys that fit my age?
Lo, I am tall and strong, well skilled to hunt,
Patient of toil and hunger, and not yet
Have seen the danger which I dare not look
Full in the face; what hinders me to be
A mighty Brave and Chief among my kin?"
So, taking up his arrows and his bow,
As if to hunt, he journeyed swiftly on,
Until he gained the wigwams of his tribe,
Where, choosing out a bride, he soon forgot,
In all the fret and bustle of new life,
The little Sheemah and his father's charge.

Now when the sister found her brother gone,
And that for many days he came not back,
She wept for Sheemah more than for herself;
For Love bides longest in a woman's heart,
And flutters many times before he flies,
And then doth perch so nearly, that a word
May lure him back, as swift and glad as light;
And Duty lingers even when love is gone,
Oft looking out in hope of his return;
And after Duty hath been driven forth,
Then Selfishness creeps in the last of all,
Warming her lean hands at the lonely hearth,
And crouching o'er the embers, to shut out,
Whatever paltry warmth and light are left,
With avaricious greed, from all besides.
So, for long months, the sister hunted wide,
And cared for little Sheemah tenderly;

A Chippewa Legend.

But, daily more and more, the loneliness
Grew wearisome, and to herself she sighed,
“Am I not fair? at least the glassy pool,
That hath no cause to flatter, tells me so;
But, O, how flat and meaningless the tale,
Unless it tremble on a lover’s tongue!
Beauty hath no true glass, except it be
In the sweet privacy of loving eyes.”
Thus deemed she idly, and forgot the lore



“AM I NOT FAIR? AT LEAST THE GLASSY POOL, THAT
HATH NO CAUSE TO FLATTER, TELLS ME SO,”

Which she had learned of nature and the woods,
That beauty’s chief reward is to itself,
And that the eyes of Love reflect alone
The inward fairness, which is blurred and lost
Unless kept clear and white by Duty’s care.
So she went forth and sought the haunts of men,
And, being wedded, in her household cares,
Soon, like the elder brother, quite forgot
The little Sheemah and her father’s charge.

But Sheemah, left alone within the lodge,
 Waited and waited, with a shrinking heart.
 Thinking each rustle was his sister's step,
 Till hope grew less and less, and then went out,
 And every sound was changed from hope to fear.
 Few sounds there were;—the dropping of a nut,
 The squirrel's chirrup, and the jay's harsh scream,
 Autumn's sad remnants of blithe Summer's cheer,
 Heard at long intervals, seemed but to make
 The dreadful void of silence silenter.
 Soon what small store his sister left was gone,
 And through the Autumn he made shift to live
 On roots and berries, gathered in much fear
 Of wolves, whose ghastly howl he heard oftentimes,
 Hollow and hungry, at the dead of night,
 But Winter came at last, and, when the snow,
 Thick-heaped for gleaming leagues o'er hill and plain,
 Spread its unbroken silence over all,
 Made bold by hunger, he was fain to glean,
 (More sick at heart than Ruth, and all alone,)
 After the harvest of the merciless wolf,
 Grim Boaz, who, sharp-ribbed and gaunt, yet feared
 A thing more wild and starving than himself;
 Till, by degrees, the wolf and he grew friends,
 And shared together all the winter through.

Late in the Spring, when all the ice was gone,
 The elder brother, fishing in the lake,
 Upon whose edge his father's wigwam stood,
 Heard a low moaning noise upon the shore:
 Half like a child it seemed, half like a wolf,
 And straightway there was something in his heart
 That said, "It is thy brother Sheemah's voice."
 So, paddling swiftly to the bank, he saw,
 Within a little thicket close at hand,
 A child that seemed fast changing to a wolf,
 From the neck downward, gray with shaggy hair,
 That still crept on and upward as he looked.
 The face was turned away, but well he knew
 That it was Sheemah's, even his brother's face.
 Then with his trembling hands he hid his eyes,
 And bowed his head, so that he might not see
 The first look of his brother's eyes, and cried,
 "O, Sheemah! O, my brother speak to me!
 Dost thou not know me, that I am thy brother?"



"SO, PADDLING SWIFTLY TO THE BANK, HE SAW, A CHILD
THAT SEEMED FAST CHANGING TO A WOLF."

Come to me, little Sheemah, thou shalt dwell
 With me henceforth, and know no care or want!"

Sheemah was silent for a space, as if
 'T were hard to summon up a human voice,
 And when he spake, the sound was of a wolf's

"I know thee not, nor art thou what thou sayest;
 I have none other brethren than the wolves,
 And till thy heart be changed from what it is,
 Thou art not worthy to be called their kin."

Then groaned the other, with a choking tongue,
 "Alas! my heart is changed right bitterly;
 'T is shrunk and parched within me even now!"

And looking upward fearfully he saw
 Only a wolf that shrank away and ran,
 Ugly and fierce, to hide among the woods.

This rude, wild legend hath an inward sense,
 Which it were well we all should lay to heart;
 For have not we our younger brothers, too,
 The poor, the outcast, and the trodden-down,
 Left fatherless on earth to pine for bread?
 They are ahungered for our love and care,
 It is their spirits that are famishing,
 And our dear Father, in his Testament,
 Bequeathed them to us as our dearest trust,
 Whereof we shall give up a straight account,
 Woe, if we have forgotten them, and left
 Those souls that might have grown so fair and glad,
 That only wanted a kind word from us,
 To be so free and gently beautiful.—
 Left them to feel their birthright as a curse,
 To grow all lean and cramped, and full of sores,
 And last,—sad change, that surely comes to all
 Shut out from manhood by their brother man,—
 To turn mere wolves, for lack of aught to love!

Hear it, O England! thou who liest asleep
 On a volcano, from whose pent-up wrath,
 Already some red flashes, bursting up,
 Glare bloodily on coronet and crown
 And gray cathedral looming huge aloft,
 With dreadful portent of o'erhanging doom!
 Thou Dives among nations! from whose board,
 After the dogs are fed, poor Lazarus,
 Crooked and worn with toil, and hollow-eyed,
 Begs a few crumbs in vain!

A Chippewa Legend.

I honor thee
 For all the lessons thou has taught the world,
 Not few nor poor, and freedom chief of all;
 I honor thee for thy huge energy,
 Thy tough endurance, and thy fearless heart:
 And how could man, who speaks with English words,
 Think lightly of the blessed womb that bare
 Shakspeare and Milton, and full many more
 Whose names are now our earth's sweet lullabies,
 Wherewith she cheers the infancy of those
 Who are to do her honor in their lives?
 Yet I would bid thee, ere too late, beware,
 Lest, while thou playest off thine empty farce
 Of Queenship to outface a grinning world,
 Patching thy purple out with filthy rags,
 To make thy madness a more bitter scoff,
 Thy starving millions—who not only pine
 For body's bread, but for the bread of life,
 The light, which from their eyes is quite shut out
 By the broad mockery of thy golden roof,—
 Should turn to wolves that hanker for thy blood,
 Even now their cry, which o'er the ocean-stream,
 Wanders and moans upon the awe-struck ear,
 Clear-heard above the sea's eternal wail,
 But deeper far, and mournfuller than that
 (For naught so fathomless as woe unshared,)
 Hath learned a savage meaning of the wolf,
 Whose nature now half-triumphs in the heart
 Of the world-exiled and despairing Man.

And thou, my country, who to me art dear
 As is the blood that circles through my heart,
 To whom God granted it in charge to be
 Freedom's apostle to a trampled world,
 Who shouldst have been a mighty name to shake
 Old lies and shams as with a voice from Heaven,
 Art little better than a sneer and mock,
 And tyrants smile to see thee holding up
 Freedom's broad Ægis o'er three million slaves!
 Shall God forget himself to humor thee?
 Shall Justice lie to screen thine ugly sin!
 Shall the eternal laws of truth become
 Cobwebs to let thy foul oppression through?
 Shall the untiring Vengeance, that pursues,
 Age after age, upon the sinner's track,

Roll back his burning deluge at thy beck ?
 Woe ! woe ! Even now I see thy star drop down,
 Waning and pale, its faint disc flecked with blood,
 That had been set in heaven gloriously,
 To beacon Man to Freedom and to home !
 Woe ! woe ! I hear the loathsome serpent hiss,
 Trailing, unharmed, its slow and bloated folds
 O'er the lone ruins of thy Capitol !
 I see those outcast millions turned to wolves,
 That howl and snarl o'er Freedom's gory corse,
 And lap the ebbing heart's-blood of that Hope,
 Which would have made our earth smile back on heaven,
 A happy child upon a happy mother,
 From whose ripe breast it drew the milk of life.

But no, my country ! other thoughts than these
 Befit a son of thine : serener thoughts
 Befit the heart which can, unswerved, believe
 That Wrong already feels itself o'ercome,
 If but one soul hath strength to see the right,
 Or one free tongue dare speak it. All mankind
 Look, with an anxious flutter of the heart,
 To see thee working out thy glorious doom.
 Thou shalt not, with a lie upon thy lips,
 Forever prop up cunning despotisms,
 And help to strengthen every tyrant's plea,
 By striving to make man's deep soul content
 With a half-truth that feeds it with mere wind.
 God judgeth us by what we know of right,
 Rather than what we practice that is wrong,
 Unknowingly ; and thou shalt yet be bold
 To stand before Him, with a heart made clean
 By doing that He taught thee how to preach.
 Thou yet shalt do thy holy errand ; yet,
 That little Mayflower, convoyed by the winds
 And the rude waters to our rocky shore,
 Shall scatter Freedom's seed throughout the world,
 And all the nations of the earth shall come,
 Sifting, to share the harvest-home of truth.

The Vision of Sir Launfal.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST.

OVER his keys the musing organist,
 Beginning doubtfully and far away,
 First lets his fingers wander as they list,
 And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay;

Then, as the touch of his loved
 instrument

Gives hope and fervor, nearer
 draws his theme,
 First guessed by faint auroral
 flushes sent
 Along the wavering vista of
 his dream.

Not only around our infancy
 Doth heaven with all its
 splendors lie;
 Daily, with souls that cringe
 and plot,
 We Sinais climb and know
 it not;

Over our manhood bend the
 skies;
 Against our fallen and traitor
 lives
 The great winds utter
 prophecies;
 With our faint hearts the
 mountain strives;
 Its arms outstretched, the
 druid wood
 Waits with its benedicite;
 And to our age's drowsy blood
 Still shouts the inspiring sea.



OVER HIS KEYS THE MUSING ORGANIST, FIRST
 LETS HIS FINGERS WANDER AS THEY LIST."

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
 The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
 We bargain for the graves we lie in;
 At the Devil's booth are all things sold,
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
 For a cap and bells our lives we pay,

Bubbles we earn with a whole soul's tasking :

'T is heaven alone that is given away.

'T is only God may be had for the asking ;

There is no price set on the lavish summer ;

And June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June ?

Then, if ever, come perfect days ;

Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays :

Whether we look, or whether we listen,

We hear life murmur, or see it glisten ;

Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers,

And, grasping blindly above it for light,

Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers ;

The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys ;

The cowslip startles in meadows green,

The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,

And there 's never a leaf or a blade too mean

To be some happy creature's palace ;

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

Atit like a blossom among the leaves,

And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives ;

His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,

And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings ;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—

In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best ?

Now is the high-tide of the year,

And whatever of life hath ebbed away

Comes flooding back, with a ripply cheer,

Into every bare inlet and creek and bay ;

Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,

We are happy now because God so wills it ;

No matter how barren the past may have been,

'T is enough for us now that the leaves are green ;

We sit in the warm shade and feel right well

How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell ;

We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing

That skies are clear and grass is growing ;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear,

That dandelions are blossoming near,

That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,

The Vision of Sir Launfal.

That the river is bluer than the sky,
 That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
 And if the breeze kept the good news back,
 For other couriers we should not lack;
 We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
 And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
 Warmed with the new wine of the year,
 Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
 Everything is happy now,
 Everything is upward striving;
 'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
 As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
 'T is the natural way of living:
 Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
 In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
 And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
 The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
 The soul partakes the season's youth,
 And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
 Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
 Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
 What wonder if Sir Launfal now
 Remembered the keeping of his vow?

PART FIRST.

I.

— “My golden spurs now bring to me,
 And bring to me my richest mail,
 For to-morrow I go over land and sea
 In search of the Holy Grail;
 Shall never a bed for me be spread,
 Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
 Till I begin my vow to keep;
 Here on the rushes will I sleep,
 And perchance there may come a vision true
 Ere day create the world anew.”
 Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
 Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
 And into his soul the vision flew.

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
 In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,

The birds sang as if it were
 The one day of summer in all the year,
 And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees :
 The castle alone in the landscape lay
 Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray ;
 ' T was the proudest hall in the North Countree,
 And never its gates might opened be,
 Save to lord or lady of high degree ;
 Summer besieged it on every side,
 But the churlish stone her assaults defied ;
 She could not scale the chilly wall,
 Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
 Stretched left and right,
 Over the hills and out of sight ;
 Green and broad was every tent,
 And out of each a murmur went
 Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with
 a surly clang,
 And through the dark arch a
 charger sprang,
 Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden
 knight,
 In his gilded mail, that flamed
 so bright
 It seemed the dark castle had
 gathered all
 Those shafts the fierce sun had
 shot over its wall
 In his siege of three hundred
 summers long,
 And, binding them all in one
 blazing sheaf,
 Had cast them forth : so
 young and strong,
 And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
 Sir Launfal flashed forth in his
 unscarred mail,
 To seek in all climes for the
 Holy Grail.



"THE DRAWBRIDGE DROPPED WITH A SURLY CLANG, AND THROUGH THE DARK ARCH A CHARGER SPRANG."

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
 And morning in the young knight's heart ;

The Vision of Sir Launfal.

Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free.
And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.



"THE LEPER RAISED NOT THE GOLD FROM THE DUST."

V.

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor did shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still

Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI.

The leper raised not the gold from the dust :
“ Better to me the poor man’s crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before.”

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND.

DOWN swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer’s cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard and built a roof
’Neath which he could house him winter-proof;
All night by the white stars’ frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars:
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;

The Vision of Sir Launfal.

Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
 With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
 Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
 For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
 He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
 And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
 Which crystallised the beams of moon and sun,
 And made a star of every one :
 No mortal builder's most rare device
 Could match this winter-palace of ice;
 'T was as if every image that mirrored lay
 In his depths serene through the summer day,
 Each flitting shadow of earth and sky.
 Lest the happy model should be lost,
 Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
 By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
 The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
 And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
 With lightsome green of ivy and holly;
 Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
 Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
 The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
 And belly and tug as a flag in the wind :
 Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
 Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
 And swift little troops of silent sparks,
 Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
 Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
 Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
 Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
 And rattles and wrings
 The icy strings,
 Singing in dreary monotone,
 A Christmas carol of its own,
 Whose burden still, as he might guess,
 Was—" Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless ! "

The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
 As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
 And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
 The great hall-fire so cheery and bold,
 Through the window-slits of the castle old,

Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND.

I.

THERE was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the frost's swift shuttles its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitley
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II.

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till one by one
He can count the camels in the sun,
As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV.

“For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;”—
The happy camels may reach the spring,

But Sir Launfal sees naught save the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanch'd bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.



"SIR LAUNFAL TURNED FROM HIS OWN HARD GATE."

V.

And Sir Launfal said,—“ I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—

And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side :
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me ;
Behold, through him, I give to thee ! ”

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he caged his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust ;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink,
' T was a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
' T was water out of a wooden bowl,
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And ' t was red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place ;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII.

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
Which mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon ;
And the voice that was calmer than silence said,
“ Lo it is I, be not afraid !
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail ;
Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now ;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree ;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need ;



"THE LEPER NO LONGER CROUCHED AT HIS SIDE.
BUT STOOD BEFORE HIM GLORIFIED."

Not what we give, but what we share,—
 For the gift without the giver is bare;
 Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
 Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoon:—
 "The Grail in my castle here is found!
 Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
 Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
 He must be fenced with stronger mail
 Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X.

The castle gate stands open now,
 And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
 As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
 No longer scowl the turrets tall,
 The summer's long siege at last is o'er;
 When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
 She entered with him in disguise,
 And mastered the fortress by surprise;
 There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
 She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
 The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
 Has hall and bower at his command;
 And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
 But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

NOTE.—According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the last supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the foregoing poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the date of King Arthur's reign.

Sonnets.

SONNETS.

I.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

I PRAY thee call not this society;
 I asked for bread, thou givest me a stone;
 I am an hungered, and I find not one
 To give me meat, to joy or grieve with me;
 I find not here what I went out to see—
 Souls of true men, of women who can move
 The deeper, better part of us to love,
 Souls that can hold with mine communion free.
 Alas! must then these hopes, these longings high,
 This yearning of the soul for brotherhood,
 And all that makes us pure, and wise, and good,
 Come broken-hearted, home again to die?
 No, Hope is left, and prays with bended head,
 "Give us this day, O God, our daily bread!"

II.

GREAT human nature, whither art thou fled?
 Art these things creeping forth and back agen,
 These hollow formalists and echoes, men?
 Art thou entombed with the mighty dead?
 In God's name, no! not yet hath all been said,
 Or done, or longed for, that is truly great;
 These pitiful dried crusts will never sate
 Natures for which pure Truth is daily bread;
 We were not meant to plod along the earth,
 Strange to ourselves and to our fellows strange;
 We were not meant to struggle from our birth
 To skulk and creep, and in mean pathways range;
 Act! with stern truth, large faith, and loving will!
 Up and be doing! God is with us still.

III.

TO A FRIEND.

ONE strip of bark may feed the broken tree,
 Giving to some few limbs a sickly green;
 And one light shower on the hills, I ween,
 May keep the spring from drying utterly.
 Thus seemeth it with these our hearts to be;
 Hope is the strip of bark, the shower of rain.
 And so they are not wholly crushed with pain.

But live and linger on, for sadder sight to see;
 Much do they err, who tell us that the heart
 May not be broken; what, then, can we call
 A broken heart, if this may not be so,
 This death in life, when, shrouded in its pall,
 Shunning and shunned, it dwelleth all apart,
 Its power, its love, its sympathy laid low?

IV.

So may it be, but let it not be so,
 O, let it not be so with thee, my friend;
 Be of good courage, bear up to the end,
 And on thine after way rejoicing go!
 We all must suffer, if we aught would know;
 Life is a teacher stern, and wisdom's crown
 Is oft a crown of thorns, whence trickling down,
 Blood, mixed with tears, blinding our eyes doth flow;
 But Time, a gentle nurse, shall wipe away
 This bloody sweat, and thou shalt find on earth,
 That woman is not all in all to Love,
 But, living by a new and second birth,
 Thy soul shall see all things below, above,
 Grow bright and brighter to the perfect day.

V.

O CHILD of Nature! O most meek and free,
 Most gentle spirit of true nobleness!
 Thou doest not a worthy deed the less
 Because the world may not its greatness see;
 What were a thousand triumphings to thee,
 Who, in thyself, art as a perfect sphere
 Wrapt in a bright and natural atmosphere
 Of mighty-souledness and majesty?
 Thy soul is not too high for lowly things,
 Feels not its strength seeing its brother weak,
 Not for itself unto itself is dear,
 But for that it may guide the wanderings
 Of fellow-men, and to their spirits speak
 The lofty faith of heart that knows no fear.

VI.

“FOR this true nobleness I seek in vain,
 In woman and in man I find it not,
 I almost weary of my earthly lot,
 My life-strings are dried up with burning pain.”—
 Thou find'st it not? I pray thee look again,

Look *inward* through the depths of thine own soul;
 How is it with thee ? Art thou sound and whole ?
 Doth narrow search show thee no earthly stain ?
 BE NOBLE ! and the nobleness that lies
 In other men, sleeping but never dead,
 Will rise in majesty to meet thine own ;
 Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
 Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
 And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.

VII.

TO ———

DEEM it no Sodom-fruit of vanity,
 Or fickle fantasy of unripe youth
 Which ever takes the fairest shows for truth,
 That I should wish my verse beloved of thee ;
 'Tis love's deep thirst which may not quenched be.
 There is a gulf of longing and unrest,
 A wild love-craving not to be repress.
 Whereto, in all our hearts, as to the sea,
 The streams of feeling do forever flow.
 Therefore it is that thy well-meted praise
 Falleth so shower-like and fresh on me,
 Filling those springs which else had sunk full low,
 Lost in the dreary desert-sands of woe,
 Or parched by passion's fierce and withering blaze.

VIII.

MIGHT I but be beloved, and, O most fair
 And perfect-ordered soul, beloved of thee,
 How should I feel a cloud of earthly care,
 If thy blue eyes were ever clear to me ?
 O woman's love ! O flower most bright and rare ?
 That blossom'st brightest in extremest need,
 Woe, woe is me ! that thy so precious seed
 Is ever sown by Fancy's changeful air,
 And grows sometimes in poor and barren hearts,
 Who can be little even in the light
 Of thy meek holiness—while souls more great
 Are left to wander in a starless night,
 Praying unheard—and yet the hardest parts
 Befit those best who best can cope with Fate.

IX.

WHY should we ever weary of this life ?
 Our souls should widen ever, not contract,

Grow stronger, and not harder, in the strife
 Filling each moment with a noble act ;
 If we live thus, of vigor all compact,
 Doing our duty to our fellow-men,
 And striving rather to exalt our race
 Than our poor selves, with earnest hand or pen
 We shall erect our names a dwelling-place
 Which not all ages shall cast down agen ;
 Offspring of Time shall then be born each hour,
 Which as of old, earth lovingly shall guard,
 To live forever in youth's perfect flower,
 And guide her future children Heavenward.

X.

GREEN MOUNTAINS.

YE mountains, that far off lift up your heads.
 Seen dimly through their canopies of blue,
 The shade of my unrestful spirit sheds
 Distance-created beauty over you ;
 I am not well content with this far view ;
 How may I know what foot of loved-one treads
 Your rock moss-grown and sun-dried torrent beds ?
 We should love all things better, if we knew
 What claims the meanest have upon our hearts :
 Perchance even now some eye, that would be bright
 To meet my own, looks on your mist-robed forms ;
 Perchance your grandeur a deep joy imparts
 To souls that have encircled mine with light—
 O brother-heart, with thee my spirit warms !

XI.

My friend, adown Life's valley, hand in hand,
 With grateful change of grave and merry speech
 Or song, our hearts unlocking each to each,
 We'll journey onward to the silent land ;
 And when stern Death shall loose that loving band,
 Taking in his cold hand a hand of ours,
 The one shall strew the other's grave with flowers,
 Nor shall his heart a moment be unmanned.
 My friend and brother ! if thou goest first,
 Wilt thou no more re-visit me below ?
 Yea, when my heart seems happy, causelessly
 And swells, not dreaming why, as it would burst
 With joy unspeakable—my soul shall know
 That thou, unseen, are bending over me.

Sonnets.

XII.

VERSE cannot say how beautiful thou art,
 How glorious the calmness of thine eyes,
 Full of unconquerable energies,
 Telling that thou has acted well thy part.
 No doubt or fear thy steady faith can start,
 No thought of evil dare come nigh to thee.
 Who hast the courage meek of purity.
 The self-stayed greatness of a loving heart,
 Strong with serene, enduring fortitude;
 Where'er thou art, that seems thy fitting place,
 For not of forms, but Nature, art thou child;
 And lowest things put on a noble grace
 When touched by ye, O patient, Ruth-like, mild
 And spotless hands of earnest womanhood.

XIII.

THE soul would fain its loving kindness tell,
 But custom hangs like lead upon the tongue;
 The heart is brimful, hollow crowds among,
 When it finds one whose life and thought are well;
 Up to the eyes its gushing love doth swell,
 The angel cometh and the waters move,
 Yet it is fearful still to say "I love,"
 And words come grating as a jangled bell.
 O might we only speak but what we feel,
 Might the tongue pay but what the heart doth owe,
 Not Heaven's great thunder, when deep peal on peal,
 It shakes the earth, could rouse our spirits so,
 Or to the soul such majesty reveal,
 As two short words half-spoken faint and low!

XIV.

I SAW a gate: a harsh voice spake and said,
 "This is the gate of Life;" above was writ,
 "Leave hope behind, all ye who enter it;"
 Than shrank my heart within itself for dread;
 But softer, than the summer rain is shed,
 Words dropt upon my soul, and they did say,
 "Fear nothing, Faith shall save thee, watch and pray!"
 So, without fear I lifted up my head,
 And lo! that writing was not, one fair word
 Was carven in its stead, and it was "Love,"
 Then rained once more those sweet tones from above
 With healing on their wings: I humbly heard,

“ I am the Life, ask and it shall be given!
I am the way, by me ye enter Heaven!”

XV.

I WOULD not have this perfect love of ours
Grow from a single root, a single stem,
Bearing no goodly fruit, but only flowers
That idly hide Life's iron diadem:
It should grow alway like that Eastern tree
Whose limbs take root and spread forth constantly;
That love for one, from which there doth not spring
Wide love for all, is but a worthless thing.
Not in another world, as poets prate,
Dwell we apart, above the tide of things,
High floating o'er earth's clouds on faery wings;
But our pure love doth ever elevate
Into a holy bond of brotherhood
All earthly things, making them pure and good.

XVI.

To the dark, narrow house where loved ones go,
Whence no steps outward turn, whose silent door
None but the sexton knocks at any more,
Are they not sometimes with us yet below?
The longings of the soul would tell us so;
Although, so pure and fine their being's essence,
Our bodily eyes are witless of their presence,
Yet not within the tomb their spirits glow,
Like wizard lamps pent up, but whensoever
With great thoughts worthy of their high behests
Our souls are filled, those bright ones with us be,
As, in the patriarch's tent, his angel guests;—
O let us live so worthily, that never
We may be far from that blest company.

XVII.

I FAIN would give to thee the loveliest things,
For lovely things belong to thee of right,
And thou hast been as peaceful to my sight,
As the still thoughts that summer twilight brings;
Beneath the shadow of thine angel wings
O let me live! O let me rest in thee,
Growing to thee more and more utterly,
Upbearing and upborn, till outward things
Are only as they share in thee a part!
Look kindly on me, let thy holy eyes

Sonnets.

Bless me from the deep fulness of thy heart ;
 So shall my soul in its right strength arise.
 And nevermore shall pine and shrink and start,
 Safe-sheltered in thy full souled sympathies.

XVIII.

MUCH I had mused of Love, and in my soul
 There was one chamber where I dared not look,
 So much its dark and dreary voidness shook
 My spirit, feeling that I was not whole :
 All my deep longings flowed toward one goal
 For long, long years, but were not answered,
 Till hope was drooping, Faith well-nigh stone-dead,
 And I was still a blind, earth-delving mole ;
 Yet did I know that God was wise and good,
 And would fulfil my being late or soon ;
 Nor was such thought in vain, for, seeing thee,
 Great Love rose up, as, o'er a black pine wood,
 Round, bright, and clear, upstarteth the full moon,
 Filling my soul with glory utterly.

XIX.

SAYEST thou, most beautiful, that thou wilt wear
 Flowers and leafy crowns when thou art old,
 And that thy heart shall never grow so cold
 But they shall love to wreath thy silvered hair
 And into age's snows the hope of spring-tide bear?
 O, in thy childlike wisdom's moveless hold
 Dwell ever ! still the blessings manifold
 Of purity, of peace, and untaught care
 For other's hearts, around thy pathway shed,
 And thou shalt have a crown of deathless flowers
 To glorify and guard thy blessed head
 And give their freshness to thy life's last hours ;
 And, when the Bridegroom calleth, they shall be
 A wedding-garment white as snow for thee.

XX.

POET ! who sittest in thy pleasant room,
 Warming thy heart with idle thoughts of love,
 And of a holy life that leads above,
 Striving to keep life's spring-flowers still in bloom,
 And lingering to snuff their sweet perfume—
 O, there were other duties meant for thee,
 Than to sit down in peacefulness and Be !
 O, there are brother-hearts that dwell in gloom,

Souls loathsome, foul and black with daily sin,
 So crusted o'er with baseness, that no ray
 Of heaven's blessed light may enter in!
 Come down, then, to the hot and dusty way,
 And lead them back to hope and peace again—
 For, save in Act, thy Love is all in vain.

XXI.

“NO MORE BUT SO?”

No more but so? Only with uncold looks,
 And with a hand not laggard to clasp mine,
 Think'st thou to pay what debt of love is thine?
 No more but so? Like gushing water-brooks,
 Freshening and making green the dimmest nooks
 Of thy friend's soul thy kindness should flow;
 But, if 't is bounded by not saying “no,”
 I can find more of friendship in my books,
 All lifeless though they be, and more, far more
 In every simplest moss, or flower, or tree;
 Open to me thy heart of heart's deep core,
 Or never say that I am dear to thee;
 Call me not Friend, if thou keep close the door
 That leads into thine inmost sympathy.

XXII.

TO A VOICE HEARD IN MOUNT AUBURN.

LIKE the low warblings of a leaf-hid bird,
 Thy voice came to me through the screening trees,
 Singing the simplest, long-known melodies;
 I had no glimpse of thee, and yet I heard
 And blest thee for each clearly caroled word.
 I longed to thank thee, and my heart would frame
 Mary or Ruth, some sisterly, sweet name
 For thee, yet could I not my lips have stirred;
 I knew that thou wert lovely, that thine eyes
 Were blue and downcast, and methought large tears,
 Unknown to thee, up to their lids must rise
 With half-sad memories of other years,
 As to thyself alone thou sangest o'er
 Words that to childhood seemed to say “No More!”

XXIII.

ON READING SPENSER AGAIN.

DEAR, gentle Spenser! thou my soul dost lead,
 A little child again, through Fairy land,

By many a bower and stream of golden sand,
 And many a sunny plain whose light doth breed
 A sunshine in my happy heart, and feed
 My fancy with sweet visions; I become
 A knight, and with my charmed arms would roam
 To seek for fame in many a wondrous deed
 Of high emprise—for I have seen the light
 Of Una's angel's face, the golden hair
 And backward eyes of startled Florimel;
 And, for their holy sake I would outdare
 A host of cruel Paynims in the fight,
 Or Archimage and all the powers of Hell.

XXIV.

LIGHT of mine eyes! with thy so trusting look,
 And thy sweet smile of charity and love,
 That from a treasure well uplaid above,
 And from a hope in Christ its blessing took;
 Light of my heart! which when it could not brook
 The coldness of another's sympathy,
 Finds ever a deep peace and stay in thee,
 Warm as the sunshine of a mossy nook;
 Light of my soul! who by thy saintliness
 And faith that acts itself in daily life,
 Canst raise me above weakness, and canst bless
 The hardest thralldom of my earthly strife—
 I dare not say how much thou art to me
 Even to myself—and O, far less to thee!

XXV.

SILENT as one who treads on new-fallen snow,
 Love came upon me ere I was aware;
 Not light of heart, for there was troublous care
 Upon his eyelids, drooping them full low,
 As with sad memory of a healed woe;
 The cold rain shivered in his golden hair.
 As if an outcast lot had been his share,
 And he seemed doubtful whither he should go:
 Then fell he on my neck, and, in my breast
 Hiding his face, awhile sobbed bitterly,
 As half in grief to be so long distressed,
 And half in joy at his security—
 At last uplooking from his place of rest,
 His eyes shone blessedness and hope on me.

XXVI.

A GENTLENESS that grows of steady faith;
A joy that sheds its sunshine everywhere;
A humble strength and readiness to bear
Those burdens which strict duty ever lay'th
Upon our souls;—which unto sorrow saith,
“Here is no soil for thee to strike thy roots,
Here only grow those sweet and precious fruits
Which ripen for the soul that well obey'th;
A patience which the world can never give
Nor take away; a courage strong and high,
That dares in simple usefulness to live,
And without one sad look behind to die
When that day comes; these tell me that our love
Is building for itself a home above.

XXVII.

WHEN the glad soul is full to overflow,
Unto the tongue all power it denies,
And only trusts its secret to the eyes;
For, by an inborn wisdom, it doth know
There is no other eloquence but so;
And, when the tongue's weak utterance doth suffice,
Prisoned within the body's cell it lies,
Remembering in tears its exiled woe:
That word which all mankind so long to hear,
Which bears the spirit back to whence it came,
Maketh this sullen clay as crystal clear,
And will not be enclouded in a name;
It is a truth which we can feel and see,
But is as boundless as Eternity.

XXVIII.

TO THE EVENING-STAR.

WHEN we have once said lowly “Evening-Star!”
Words give no more—for, in thy silver pride,
Thou shinest as nought else can shine beside.
The thick smoke, coiling round the sooty bar
Forever, and the custom'd lamp-light mar
The stillness of my thought—seeing things glide
So samely:—then I ope my windows wide,
And gaze in peace to where thou shin'st afar,
The wind that comes across the faint-white snow
So freshly, and the river dimly seen,
Seem like new things that never had been so

Before; and thou art bright as thou hast been
 Since thy white rays put sweetness in the eyes
 Of the first souls that loved in Paradise.

XXIX.

READING.

As one who on some well-known landscape looks,
 Be it alone, or with some dear friend nigh,
 Each day beholdeth fresh variety,
 New harmonies of hills, and trees and brooks—
 So it is with the worthiest choice of books,
 And oftenest read: if thou no meaning spy,
 Deem there is meaning wanting in thine eye;
 We are so lured from judgment by the crooks
 And winding ways of covert fantasy,
 Or turned unwittingly down beaten tracks
 Of our foregone conclusions, that we see,
 In our own want, the writer's misdeemed lacks:
 It is with true books as with Nature, each
 New day of living doth new insight teach.

XXX.

TO ———, AFTER A SNOW-STORM.

BLUE as thine eyes the river gently flows
 Between his banks, which far as eye can see,
 Are whiter than aught else on earth may be,
 Save inmost thoughts that in thy soul repose;
 The trees, all crystallised by the melted snows,
 Sparkle with gems and silver, such as we
 In childhood saw 'mong groves of Faërie,
 And the dear skies are sunny-blue as those;
 Still as thy heart, when next mine own it lies
 In love's full safety, is the bracing air;
 The earth is all enwrapt with draperies
 Snow-white as that pure love might choose to wear—
 O for one moment's look into thine eyes,
 To share the joy such scene would kindle there!

XXXI.

THROUGH suffering and sorrow thou has passed
 To show us what a woman true may be:
 They have not taken sympathy from thee,
 Nor made thee any other than thou wast;
 Save as some tree, which, in a sudden blast,
 Sheddeth those blossoms, that are weakly grown,

Upon the air, but keepeth every one
 Whose strength gives warrant of good fruit at last :
 So thou hast shed some blooms of gayety,
 But never one of steadfast cheerfulness ;
 Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity



"THE RIVER GENTLY FLOWS BETWEEN HIS BANKS."

Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,
 But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see
 How many simple ways there are to bless.

1840.

XXXII.

WHAT were I, Love, if I were stript of thee,
 If thine eyes shut me out, whereby I live,

Thou, who unto my calmèd soul dost give
 Knowledge, and truth, and holy Mystery,
 Wherein Truth mainly lies for those who see
 Beyond the earthly and the fugitive,
 Who in the grandeur of the soul believe,
 And only in the Infinite are free ?
 Without thee I were naked, bleak and bare
 As yon dead cedar on the sea-cliff's brow ;
 And nature's teachings, which come to me now
 Common and beautiful as light and air,
 Would be as fruitless as a stream which still
 Slips through the wheel of some old ruined mill.

1841.

XXXIII.

IMPATIENCE AND REPROOF.

YES, I have felt a weariness of soul,
 A shaking of my loveful faith in man,
 Jostling with souls that ne'er beyond life's span
 Have glimpsed, to whom this empty earth is goal
 And starting-place, and death the dreadful whole ;
 But as, within the parlor's glare, at night,
 Amid loud laugh, and converse vain and light,
 Sudden without is heard the thunder's roll,
 Deep-toned and infinite, with sad reproof,—
 So, when my love and faith in man are shaken,
 Great, inborn thoughts, that will not keep aloof,
 Within my soul like those far thunders, waken,
 Growing and growing, till its depths are dinned
 With the sad sense of having deadly sinned.

1841.

XXXIV.

REFORMERS.

IF ye have not the one great lesson learned,
 Which grows in leaves, tides in the mighty sea,
 And in the stars eternally hath burned,
 That only full obedience is free,—
 If ye in pride your true birthright have spurned,
 Or, for a mess of pottage, beggarly
 Have sold it, how, in Truth's name, have ye earned
 The holy right to fight for Liberty?
 Be free, and then our God will give a sword
 Wherefore Orion's belt were not too bright ;

There shall be power in your lightest word,
To make weak Falsehood, pierced with arrowy light,
Writhe, dying of her own most foul disease,
Within her churches and her palaces!

1841.

XXXV.

THE FIERY TRIAL.

THE hungry flame hath never yet been hot
To him who won his name and crown of fire;
But it doth ask a stronger soul and higher
To bear, not longing for a prouder lot,
Those martyrdoms whereof the world knows not,—
Hope sneaped with frosty scorn, the faith of youth
Wasted in seeming vain defence of Truth.
Greatness o'ertopt with baseness, and fame got
Too late:—Yet this most bitter task was meant
For those right worthy in such cause to plead,
And therefore God sent poets, men content
To live in humbleness and body's need.
If they may tread the path where Jesus went,
And sow one grain of Love's eternal seed.

1841.

XXXVI.

GREAT Truths are portions of the soul of man;
Great souls are portions of Eternity;
Each drop of blood, that e'er through true heart ran
With lofty message, ran for thee and me;
For God's law, since the starry song began,
Hath been, and still forevermore must be,
That every deed which shall outlast Time's span
Must goad the soul to be erect and free;
Slave is no word of deathless lineage sprung,—
Too many noble souls have thought and died,
Too many mighty poets lived and sung,
And our good Saxon, from lips purified
With martyr-fire, throughout the world hath rung
Too long to have God's holy cause denied.

1841.

XXXVII.

I ASK not for those thoughts, that sudden leap
From being's sea, like the isle-seeming Kraken,

With whose great rise the ocean all is shaken
 And a heart-tremble quivers through the deep;
 Give me that growth which some perchance deem sleep,
 Wherewith the steadfast coral-stems uprise,
 Which, by the toil of gathering energies,
 Their upward way into clear sunshine keep,
 Until, by Heaven's sweetest influences,
 Slowly and slowly spreads a speck of green
 Into a pleasant island in the seas,
 Where, mid tall palms, the cane-roofed home is seen,
 And wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,
 Hearing the leaves and loving God's dear power.

1841.

XXXVIII.

TO——, ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

MAIDEN, when, such a soul as thine is born,
 The morning-stars their ancient music make,
 And, joyful, once again their song awake,
 Long silent now with melancholy scorn;
 And thou, not mindless of so blest a morn,
 By no least deed its harmony shall break,
 But shalt to that high chime thy footsteps take,
 Through life's most darksome passes, unforlorn;
 Therefore from thy pure faith thou shalt not fall,
 Therefore shalt thou be ever fair and free,
 And, in thine every motion, musical
 As summer air, majestic as the sea,
 A mystery to those who creep and crawl
 Through Time, and part it from Eternity.

1841.

XXXIX.

MY Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die;
 Albeit I ask no fairer life than this,
 Whose numbering-clock is still thy gentle kiss,
 While Time and Peace with hands enlocked fly,—
 Yet care I not where in Eternity
 We live and love, well knowing that there is
 No backward step for those who feel the bliss
 Of Faith as their most lofty yearnings high:
 Love hath so purified my heart's strong core,
 Meseems I scarcely should be startled, even,
 To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone before,

Since, with thy love, this knowledge too was given,
Which each calm day doth strengthen more and more,
That they who love are but one step from Heaven.

1841.

XL.

I CANNOT think that thou shouldst pass away,
Whose life to mine is an eternal law,
A piece of nature that can have no flaw,
A new and certain sunrise every day;
But, if thou art to be another ray
About the Son of Life, and art to live
Free from all of thee that was fugitive,
The debt of Love I will more fully pay,
Not downcast with the thought of thee so high,
But rather raised to be a nobler man,
And more divine in my humanity.
As knowing that the waiting eyes which scan
My life are lighted by a purer being,
And ask meek, calm-browed deeds, with it agreeing.

1841.

XLI.

THE HAVEN.

INTO the unruffled shelter of thy love
My bark leapt homeward from a rugged sea,
And furled its sails, and dropped right peacefully
Hope's anchor, quiet as a nestled dove:
Thou givest me all that can the true soul move
To nobleness,—a clear simplicity,
That, in the humblest man to-day, can see
Theme for high rhyme as ever poet wove,—
A noiseless love that makes things common rare,
And custom-weary toil with heaven rife,—
A faith that finds great meanings everywhere,
That, to the soul's high level, raiseth life,
And puts in eyes, that could but dimly see,
The calm, vast presence of Eternity.

1841.

XLII.

RESOLVE.

IN very truth, thou never art away,
Though miles between us cheat mine outward sense;

For I do feel thee, both by night and day,
 A hope fulfilled, a starry influence,
 That floweth through my most forgetful deed,
 And maketh crystal every part of me,
 Sowing the common earth with golden seed,
 Bright as if dropped down from the Galaxy:
 In sooth, when we have seemed most far divided,
 I inly felt we were most truly near,
 For then a light from thy great love hath glided,
 Through all that desert space, to give me cheer,
 And, as light only where it strikes we see,
 Men shall know this in my nobility.

1841.

XLIII.

THERE never yet was flower fair in vain,
 Let classic poets rhyme it as they will;
 The seasons toil that it may blow again,
 And summer's heart doth feel its every ill;
 Nor is a true soul ever born for naught;
 Wherever any such hath lived and died,
 There hath been something for true freedom wrought,
 Some bulwark levelled on the evil side:
 Toil on, then, Greatness! thou art in the right,
 However narrow souls may call thee wrong;
 Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,
 And so thou wilt in all the world's ere long;
 For worldings cannot, struggle as they may,
 From man's great soul one great thought hide away.

XLIV.

SUB PONDERE CRESCIT.

THE hope of Truth grows stronger, day by day;
 I hear the soul of Man around me waking,
 Like a great sea, its frozen fetters breaking,
 And flinging up to heaven its sunlit spray,
 Tossing huge continents in scornful play,
 And crushing them, with din of grinding thunder,
 That makes old emptiness stare in wonder;
 The memory of a glory passed away
 Lingers in every heart, as, in the shell,
 Ripples the bygone freedom of the sea,
 And, every hour, new signs of promise tell
 That the great soul shall once again be free,

For high, and yet more high, the murmurs swell
Of inward strife for truth and liberty.

1841.

XLV.

TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS.

GREAT soul, thou sittest with me in my room,
Uplifting me with thy vast, quiet eyes,
On whose full orbs, with kindly lustre, lies
The twilight warmth of ruddy ember-gloom :
Thy clear, strong tones will oft bring sudden bloom
Of hope secure, to him who lonely cries,
Wrestling with the young poet's agonies,
Neglect and scorn, which seem a certain doom ;
Yes! the few words which, like great thunder-drops,
Thy large heart down to earth shook doubtfully,
Thrilled by the inward lightning of its might,
Serene and pure, like gushing joy of light,
Shall track the eternal chords of Destiny,
After the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

1841.

XLVI.

THE POET.

POET! thou art most wealthy, being poor ;
For are not thine the only earthly ears
Made rich with golden music of the spheres?
Hast thou not snowy wings whereon to soar
Through the wide air of after and before,
And set thee high among thy crownèd peers?
Hath any man such joys as thy deep tears,
Or eyes like thine to pierce great nature's core?
Thou hast the fairy coin, which, in wrong hands,
Is merely stones and leaves,—in thine, true gold ;
Thou art the very strength of all men's shields ;
By divine right, art monarch of all lands ;
And there is none but willing tribute yields,
Of worth too precious to be bought or sold.

1841.

XLVII.

BELOVÈD, in the noisy city here,
The thought of thee can make all turmoil cease ;

Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear
 Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace;
 There is no room for any doubt or fear
 In souls so overfilled with love's increase,
 There is no memory of the bygone year
 But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect ease:
 How hath our love, half nebulous at first,
 Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!
 How have our lives and wills, (as haply erst
 They were, ere this forgetfulness begun,)
 Through all their earthly distantness outburst,
 And melted, like two rays of light, in one!

1841.

XLVIII.

FULL many noble friends my soul hath known,
 Women and men, who in my memory
 Have sown such beauty as can never die;
 And many times, when I seem all alone,
 Within my heart I call up, one by one,
 The joys I shared with them, the unlaced hours
 Of laughing thoughts, that came and went like flowers,
 Or higher argument, Apollo's own:
 Those listening eyes that gave nobility
 To humblest verses writ and read for love,
 Those burning words of high democracy,
 Those doubts that through the vague abyss would rove
 And lean o'er chasms that took away the breath,—
 When I forget them, may it be in death!

1842.

XLIX

How oft do I live o'er that blissful time
 When first I found thy love within my breast,
 Like the first violet in April's prime,
 Born a full flower, more fair than all the rest,
 And richer with the early dew of rhyme!
 Till then, I felt my heart was but a guest
 In the broad world, but now there is no clime
 Where it as rightful sovereign may not rest:
 Wherever Nature even a weed doth plant,
 There it the fulness of delight may win;
 No dead or living thing will let it want,
 None but whose heart will freely take it in;

For Love hath made it now wise Nature's child,
And from her arms it cannot be exiled.

1842.

L.

SLOW-OPENING flower of the summer morn,—
Blithe quietness of sun-delighted dew,—
Green inland oceans of unrippling corn,—
Deep thoughtfulness of never-wrinkled blue,
Whose high eternal silence seemeth born
For the lone moon and stars to wander through,—
Sunset,—and all the wreaths by Nature worn,
And momentarily thrown by for beauties new,—
My heart grows fragrant while on you I look,
And murmurs to itself, and feels at ease,
And trembles, like a sunny birch-tree shook
In rustling sparkles by a warm noon-breeze;
Yet, when I see my Love, my heart runs o'er
With sympathies and strengths undreamed before,

1842.

LI.

TO ———.

MARY, since first I knew thee, to this hour.
My love hath deepened, with my wiser sense
Of what in Woman is to reverence;
Thy clear heart, fresh as e'er was forest-flower,
Still opens more to me its beauteous dower;—
But let praise hush,—Love asks no evidence
To prove itself well-placed; we know not whence
It gleans the straws that thatch its humble bower:
We can but say we found it in the heart,
Spring of all sweetest thoughts, arch-foe of blame,
Sower of flowers in the dusty mart,
Pure vestal of the poet's holy flame,—
This is enough, and we have done our part
If we but keep it spotless as it came.

1842.

LII.

OUR love is not a fading, earthly flower;
Its wingèd seed dropt down from Paradise,
And, nurst by day and night, by sun and shower,
Doth momentarily to fresher beauty rise:

Sonnets.

To us the leafless autumn is not bare,
 Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty green,
 Our summer hearts make summer's fulness, where
 No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen :
 For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie,
 Love,—whose forgetfulness is beauty's death,
 Whose mystic key these cells of 'Thou and I
 Into the infinite freedom openeth,
 And makes the body's dark and narrow grate
 The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's palace-gate,

1842.

LIII.

THANKFULNESS,

THERE is no thankfulness more deep than this, —
 To love and love with ever-glad increase,
 To nestle in the heart with fluttering bliss
 And think that now is the full tide of peace :
 Yet still to find, with each sun-circled hour,
 A higher right to love, un hoped before,
 A fuller insight, a serener power,
 That widens down the soul's unfathomed core :
 To feel that we are blest is thankfulness,
 And thereby with exulting faith to know
 That every human heart its kind must bless
 With love, which, garnered up, rusts into woe,
 But, freely given, always turns again,
 And, for our flowers, brings us ripened grain.

1842.

LIV.

IN ABSENCE.

THESE rugged, wintry days I scarce could bear,
 Did I not know, that, in the early spring,
 When wild March winds upon their errands sing,
 Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still air,
 Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,
 They hunt up violets, and free swift brooks
 From icy cares, even as thy clear looks
 Bid my heart bloom, and sing, and break all care :
 When drops with welcome rain the April day,
 My flowers shall find their April in thine eyes,
 Save there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,
 As loath to fall out of those happy skies ;

Yet sure, my love, thou art most like to May.
That comes with steady sun when April dies.
1843.

LV.

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

HE stood upon the world's broad threshold; wide
The din of battle and of slaughter rose;
He saw God stand upon the weaker side,
That sank in seeming loss before its foes;
Many there were who made great haste and sold
Unto the cunning enemies their swords;
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power and gold,
And, underneath their soft and flowery words,
Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he went
And humbly joined him to the weaker part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the wide-spread veins of endless good.

LVI.

THE STREET.

THEY pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,
Hugging their bodies around them, like thin shrouds
Wherein their souls were buried long ago;
They trampled on their youth, and faith, and love,
They cast their hope of human-kind away,
With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,
And conquered,—and their spirits turned to clay:
Lo! how they wander round the world, their grave,
Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,
“We, only, truly live, but ye are dead.”
Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace
A dead soul's epitaph in every face!

LVII.

I GRIEVE not that ripe Knowledge takes away
The charm that Nature to my childhood wore,
For, with that insight, cometh, day by day,
A greater bliss than wonder was before;
The real doth not clip the poet's wings,—
To win the secret of a weed's plain heart

Reveals some clue to spiritual things,
 And stumbling guess becomes firm-footed art :
 Flowers are not flowers unto the poet's eyes,
 Their beauty thrills him by an inward sense ;
 He knows that outward seemings are but lies,
 Or, at the most, but earthly shadows, whence
 The soul that looks within for truth may guess
 The presence of some wondrous heavenliness.

LVIII.

YE who behold the body of my thought,
 Whose minds can surfeit on an outward grace,
 Ye learn but half the lesson that is taught,
 Looking no deeper down than Nature's face :
 Two meanings have our lightest fantasies,
 One of the flesh, and of the spirit one,
 And he who skips the latter only sees
 The painter's colors and the sculptor's stone :
 Unfathomably deep are all good things,
 Each day therefrom the soul may drink its fill,
 And straight a clearer truth to being springs,
 The self-renewing fount o'errunneth still ;
 For the unconscious poet can but write
 What is foretold him by the Infinite.

LIX.

O, HAPPY childhood ! dear, unthoughtful years
 When life flowed onward like a rover wind,
 Why did I leave your peace of heart behind
 To plunge me in this sea of doubts and fears ?
 Down, foolish sigh ! have not my manhood's tears
 Washed off the scales that made my nature blind,
 Letting Truth's growing light sure passage find
 Into my soul, where now the sky half-clears ?
 Thank God that I am numbered now with men,
 That there are hearts that need my love and me,
 That I have sorrows now to make me ken
 My strength and weakness, and my right to be
 Brother to those, the outcast and the poor,
 Driven back to darkness from the world's proud door !

LX.

ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH BIRTH-DAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1843

Now have I quite passed by that cloudy If
 That darkened the wild hope of boyish days,
 When first I launched my slender-sided skiff

Upon the wide sea's dim, unsounded ways;
 Now doth Love's sun my soul with splendor fill,
 And Hope hath struggled upward into Power,
 Soft Wish is hardened into sinewy Will,
 And Longing into Certainty doth tower:
 The love of beauty knoweth no despair;
 My heart would break, if I should dare to doubt,
 That from the Wrong, which makes its dragon's lair
 Here on the Earth, fair Truth shall wander out,
 Teaching mankind, that Freedom's held in fee
 Only by those who labor to 'set free.

LXI.

TO J. R. GIDDINGS.

GIDDINGS, far rougher names than thine have grown
 Smoother than honey on the lips of men;
 And thou shalt aye be honorably known,
 As one who bravely used his tongue and pen,
 As best befits a freeman,—even for those,
 To whom our Law's unblushing front denies
 A right to plead against the life-long woes
 Which are the Negro's glimpse of Freedom's skies:
 Fear nothing and hope all things, as the Right
 Alone may do securely; every hour
 The thrones of Ignorance and ancient Night
 Lose somewhat of their long-usurped power,
 And Freedom's lightest word can make them shiver
 With a base dread that clings to them forever.

SONNETS ON NAMES.

I.

EDITH.

A LILY with its frail cup filled with dew,
 Down-bending modestly, snow-white and pale,
 Shedding faint fragrance round its native vale,
 Minds me of thee, Sweeth Edith, mild and true,
 And of thy eyes so innocent and blue.
 Thy heart is fearful as a startled hare,
 Yet hath in it a fortitude to bear
 For Love's sake, and a gentle faith which grew
 Of Love: need of a stay whereon to lean,
 Felt in thyself, hath taught thee to uphold
 And comfort others, and to give, unseen,

Sonnets on Names.

The kindness thy still love cannot withhold :
Maiden, I would my sister thou hadst been,
That round thee I my guarding arms might fold.

II.

ROSE.

MY ever-lightsome, ever-laughing Rose,
Who always speakest first and thinkest last,
Thy full voice is as clear as bugle-blast ;
Right from the ear down to the heart it goes
And says " I'm beautiful ! as who but knows ? "
Thy name reminds me of old romping days,
Of kisses stolen in dark passage-ways,
Or in the parlor, if the mother-nose
Gave sign of drowsy watch. I wonder where
Are gone thy tokens, given with a glance
So full of everlasting love till morrow,
Or a day's endless grieving for the dance
Last night denied, backed with a lock of hair,
That spake of broken hearts and deadly sorrow.

III.

MARV.

DARK hair, dark eyes—not too dark to be deep
And full of feeling, yet enough to glow
With fire when angered ; feelings never slow,
But which seem rather watching to forthleap
From her full breast ; a gently-flowing sweep
Of words in common talk, a torrent-rush,
Whenever through her soul swift feelings gush,
A heart less ready to be gay than weep,
Yet cheerful ever, a calm matron-smile,
That bids God bless you ; a chaste simpleness,
With somewhat, too, of " proper pride," in dress ;—
This portrait to my mind's eye came, the while
I thought of thee, the well-grown woman Mary,
Whilome a gold-haired, laughing little fairy.

IV.

CAROLINE.

A STAINLESS sobers o'er her pretty face,
Which something but ill-hidden in her eyes,
And a quaint look about her lips denies ;
A lingering love of girlhood you can trace

In her checked laugh and half-restrained pace ;
 And, when she bears herself most womanly,
 It seems as if a watchful mother's eye
 Kept down with sobering glance her childish grace :
 Yet oftentimes her nature gushes free
 As water long held back by little hands,
 Within a pump, and let forth suddenly,
 Until, her task remembering, she stands
 A moment silent, smiling doubtfully,
 Then laughs aloud and scorns her hated bands.

V.

ANNE.

THERE is a pensiveness in quiet Anne,
 A mournful drooping of the full gray eye,
 As if she had shook hands with misery,
 And known some care since her short life began
 Her cheek is seriously pale, nigh wan,
 And, though of cheerfulness there is no lack,
 You feel as if she must be dressed in black ;
 Yet is she not of those who, all they can,
 Strive to be gay, and striving, seem most sad—
 Hers is not grief, but silent soberness ;
 You would be startled if you saw her glad,
 And startled if you saw her weep, no less ;
 She walks through life, as, on the Sabbath day,
 She decorously glides to church to pray.

L'ENVOI.

TO M. W.

WHETHER my heart hath wiser grown or not,
 In these three years, since I to thee inscribed,
 Mine own betrothed, the firstlings of my muse,—
 Poor windfalls of unripe experience,
 Young buds plucked hastily by childish hands
 Not patient to await more full-blown flowers,—
 At least it hath seen more of life and men,
 And pondered more, and grown a shade more sad ;
 Yet with no loss of hope or settled trust
 In the benignness of that Providence,
 Which shapes from out our elements awry
 The grace and order that we wonder at,
 The mystic harmony of right and wrong,

Both working out His wisdom and our good :
 A trust, Belovèd, chiefly learned of thee,
 Who hast that gift of patient tenderness,
 The instinctive wisdom of a woman's heart,
 Which, seeing Right, can yet forgive the Wrong,
 And, strong itself to comfort and sustain,
 Yet leans with full-confiding piety
 On the great Spirit that encircles all.

Less of that feeling, which the world calls love,
 Thou findest in my verse, but haply more
 Of a more precious virtue, born of that,
 The love of God, of Freedom, and of Man.
 Thou knowest well what these three years have been.
 How we have filled and graced each other's hearts,
 And every day grown fuller of that bliss,
 Which, even at first seemed more than we could bear,
 And thou, meantime, unchanged, except it be
 That thy large heart is larger, and thine eyes
 Of palest blue, more tender with the lore
 Which taught me first how good it was to love :
 And, if thy blessed name occur less oft,
 Yet thou canst see the shadow of thy soul
 In all my song, and art well-pleased to feel
 That I could ne'er be rightly true to thee,
 If I were recreant to higher aims.
 Thou didst not grant to me so rich a fief
 As thy full love, on any harder tenure
 Than that of rendering thee a single heart ;
 And I do service for thy queenly gift
 Then best, when I obey my soul, and tread
 In reverence the path she beckons me.

'T were joy enough,—if I could think that life
 Were but a barren struggle after joy,—
 To live, and love, and never look beyond
 The fair horizon of thy bounteous heart,
 Whose sunny circle stretches wide enough
 For me to find a heaped contentment in ;
 To do naught else but garner every hour
 My golden harvest of sweet memories,
 And count my boundless revenues of smiles
 And happy looks, and words so kind and gentle
 That each doth seem the first to give thy heart,—
 Content to let my waveless soul flow on,

Reflecting but the spring-time on its brink,
 And thy clear spirit bending like a sky
 O'er it,—secure that from thy virgin hands
 My brows should never lack their dearest wreath :
 But life hath nobler destinies than this,
 Which but to strive for is reward enough,
 Which to attain is all earth gives of peace.
 Thou art not of those niggard souls, who deem
 That Poesy is but to jingle words,
 To string sweet sorrows for apologies
 To hide the bareness of unfurnished hearts,
 To prate about the surfaces of things,
 And make more threadbare what was quite worn out :
 Our common thoughts are deepest, and to give
 Such beauteous tones to these, as needs must take
 Men's hearts their captives to the end of time,
 So that who hath not the choice gift of words
 Take these into his soul, as welcome friends,
 To make sweet music of his joys and woes,
 And be all Beauty's swift interpreters,
 Links of bright gold 'twixt Nature and his heart.
 This is the errand high of Poesy.
 The day has long gone by wherein 't was thought
 That men were greater poets, inasmuch
 As they were more unlike their fellow-men :
 The poet sees beyond, but dwells among,
 The wearing turmoil of our work-day life ;
 His heart not differs from another heart,
 But rather in itself enfolds the whole
 Felt by the hearts about him, high or low,
 Hath deeper sympathies and clearer sight
 And is more like a human heart than all .
 His larger portion is but harmony
 Of heart, the all-potent alchemy that turns
 The humblest things to golden inspiration ;
 A loving eye's unmatched sovereignty ;
 A self-sustained, enduring humbleness ;
 A reverence for woman ; a deep faith
 In gentleness, as strength's least doubtful proof ;
 And an electric sympathy with love,
 Heaven's first great message to all noble souls.

But, if the poet's duty be to tell
 His fellow-men their beauty and their strength,
 And show them the deep meaning of their souls,

He also is ordained to higher things;
 He must reflect his race's struggling heart,
 And shape the crude conceptions of his age,
 They tell us that our land was made for song,
 With its huge rivers and sky-piercing peaks
 Its sea-like lakes and mighty cataracts,
 Its forests vast and hoar, and prairies wide,
 And mounds that tell of wondrous tribes extinct;
 But poesy springs not from rocks and woods;
 Her womb and cradle are the human heart,
 And she can find a nobler theme for song
 In the most loathsome man that blasts the sight,
 Than in the broad expanse of sea and shore
 Between the frozen deserts of the poles.
 All nations have their message from on high,
 Each the Messiah of some central thought,
 For the fulfilment and delight of man:
 One has to teach that labor is divine;
 Another, Freedom; and another, Mind;
 And all, that God is open-eyed and just,
 The happy centre and calm heart of all.

Are, then, our woods, our mountains, and our
 streams,
 Needful to teach our poets how to sing?
 O, maiden rare, far other thoughts were ours,
 When we have sat by ocean's foaming marge,
 And watched the waves leap roaring on the rocks
 Than young Leander and his Hero had,
 Gazing from Sestos to the other shore.
 The moon looks down and ocean worships her,
 Stars rise and set, and seasons come and go
 Even as they did in Homer's elder time,
 But we behold them not with Grecian eyes:
 Then they were types of beauty and of strength,
 But now of freedom, unconfined and pure,
 Subject alone to Order's higher law.
 What cares the Russian serf or Southern slave,
 Though we should speak as man spake never yet
 Of gleaming Hudson's broad magnificence,
 Or green Niagara's never-ending roar?
 Our country hath a gospel of her own
 To preach and practice before all the world,—
 The freedom and divinity of man,
 The glorious claims of human brotherhood,—

Which to pay nobly, as a freeman should,
Gains the sole wealth that will not fly away,
And the soul's fealty to none but God.
These are realities, which make the shows
Of outward Nature, be they ne'er so grand,
Seem small and worthless, and contemptible.
These are the mountain-summits for our bards,
Which stretch far upward into heaven itself,
And give such wide-spread and exulting view
Of hope, and faith, and onward destiny,
That shrunk Parnassus to a molehill dwindles.
Our new Atlantis, like a morning-star,
Silvers the murk face of slow-yielding Night,
The herald of a fuller truth than yet
Hath gleamed upon the upraised face of Man
Since the earth glittered in her stainless prime, -
Of a more glorious sunrise than of old
Drew wondrous melodies from Memnon huge,
Yea, draws them still, though now he sits waist-deep
In the engulfing flood of whirling sand,
And looks across the wastes of endless gray,
Sole wreck, where once his hundred-gated Thebe
Pained with her mighty hum the calm, blue heaven :
Shall the dull stone say grateful orizons,
And we till noonday bar the splendor out,
Lest it reproach and chide our sluggard hearts,
Warm-nestled in the down of Prejudice,
And be content, though clad with angel-wings,
Close-clipped, to hop about from perch to perch,
In paltry cages of dead men's dead thoughts ?
O, rather, like the sky-lark, soar and sing,
And let our gushing songs befit the dawn
And sunrise, and the yet unshaken dew
Brimming the chalice of each full-blown hope,
Whose blithe front turns to greet the growing day !
Never had poets such high call before,
Never can poets hope for higher one,
And if they be but faithful to their trust,
Earth will remember them with love and joy,
And, O, far better, God will not forget.
For he who settles Freedom's principles
Writes the death-warrant of all tyranny ;
Who speaks the truth stabs Falsehood to the heart,
And his mere word makes despots tremble more
Than ever Brutus with his dagger could.

Wait for no hints from waterfalls or woods,
 Nor dream that tales of red men, brute and fierce,
 Repay the finding of this Western World,
 Or needed half the globe to give them birth:
 Spirit supreme of Freedom! not for this
 Did great Columbus tame his eagle soul
 To jostle with the daws that perch in courts;
 Not for this, friendless, on an unknown sea,
 Coping with mad waves and more mutinous spirits
 Battled he with the dreadful ache at heart
 Which tempts, with devilish subtleties of doubt,
 The hermit of that loneliest solitude,
 The silent desert of a great New Thought;
 Though loud Niagara were to-day struck dumb,
 Yet would this cataract of boiling life
 Rush plunging on and on to endless deeps,
 And utter thunder till the world shall cease,—
 A thunder worthy of the poet's song,
 And which alone can fill it with true life.
 The high evangel to our country granted
 Could make apostles, yea, with tongues of fire,
 Of hearts half-darkened back again to clay!
 'T is the soul only that is national,
 And he who pays true loyalty to that
 Alone can claim the wealth of patriotism.

Belovèd! if I wander far and oft
 From that which I believe, and feel, and know,
 Thou wilt forgive, not with a sorrowing heart,
 But with a strengthened hope of better things;
 Knowing that I, though often blind and false
 To those I love, and, O, more false than all
 Unto myself, have been most true to thee,
 And that whoso in one thing hath been true
 Can be as true in all. Therefore thy hope
 May yet not provè unfruitful, and thy love
 Meet, day by day, with less unworthy thanks,
 Whether, as now, we journey hand in hand
 Or, parted in the body, yet are one
 In spirit and the love of holy things.

SUMMER STORM.

UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,
 Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge;
 So still the air that I can hear

The slender clarion of the unseen midge;
 Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,
 Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,
 Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,
 The huddling trample of a drove of sheep



"THE HUDDLING TRAMPLE OF
 A DROVE OF SHEEP."

Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases
 In dust on the other side; life's emblem deep,
 A confused noise between two silences,
 Finding at last in dust precarious peace.
 On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses
 Soak up the sunshine; sleeps the brimming tide,

Summer Storm.

Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes
Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide
Wavers the long green sedge's shade from side to side;
But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray;
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,
And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs away.

Suddenly all the sky is hid
As with the shutting of a lid,
One by one great drops are falling
Doubtful and slow,
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling
And the wind breathes low;
Slowly the circles widen on the river,
Widen and mingle, one and all;
Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,
Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,
The wind is gathering in the west;
The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,
Then droop to a fitful rest;
Up from the stream with sluggish flap
Struggles the gull and floats away;
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap,—
We shall not see the sun go down to-day:
Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,
And tramples the grass with terrified feet,
The startled river turns leaden and harsh,
You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

Look! look! that livid flash!
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,
As if some cloud-crag split asunder.
Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,
On the Earth, which crouches in silence under;
And now a solid gray wall of rain
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile;
For a breath's space I see the blue wood again.
And ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile.
That seemed but now a league aloof,
Bursts rattling o'er the sun-parched roof;
Against the windows the storm comes dashing,

Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,
 The blue lightning flashes,
 The rapid hail clashes,
 The white waves are tumbling,
 And in one baffled roar,
 Like the toothless sea mumbling
 A rock-bristled shore,
 The thunder is rumbling
 And crashing and crumbling,—
 Will silence return nevermore?

Hush! Still as death,
 The tempest holds his breath
 As from a sudden will;
 The rain stops short, but from the eaves
 You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,
 All is so bodingly still;
 Again, now, now, again
 Plashes the rain in heavy gout,
 The crinkled lightning
 Seems ever brightening,
 And loud and long
 Again the thunder shouts
 His battle-song,—
 One quivering flash,
 One wildering crash,
 Followed by silence dead and dull,
 As if the cloud, let go,
 Leapt bodily below
 To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,
 And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon!
 No more my half-crazed fancy there,
 Can shape a giant in the air,
 No more I see his streaming hair,
 The writhing portent of his form;—
 The pale and quiet moon
 Makes her calm forehead bare,
 And the last fragments of the storm,
 Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,
 Silent and few, are drifting over me.

Remembered Music.

REMEMBERED MUSIC.

A FRAGMENT.

THICK-RUSHING, like an ocean vast
 Of bisons the far prairie shaking,
 The notes crowd heavily and fast
 As surfs, one plunging while the last
 Draws seaward from its foamy breaking.

Or in low murmurs they began,
 Rising and rising momentarily,
 As o'er a harp Æolian
 A fitful breeze, until they ran
 Up to a sudden ecstasy.

And then, like minute-drops of rain
 Ringing in water silverly,
 They lingering dropped and dropped again
 Till it was almost like a pain
 To listen when the next would be.

SONG.

TO M. L.

A LILY thou wast when I saw thee first,
 A lily-bud not opened quite,
 That hourly grew more pure and white,
 By morning, and noontide, and evening nursed.
 In all of nature thou hadst thy share;
 Thou wast waited on
 By the wind and sun;
 The rain and the dew for thee took care;
 It seemed thou never couldst be more fair.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,
 A lily-bud; but O, how strange,
 How full of wonder was the change,
 When, ripe with all sweetness, thy full bloom burst!
 How did the tears to my glad eyes start
 When the woman-flower
 Reached its blossoming hour,
 And I saw the warm deeps of thy golden heart!

Glad death may pluck thee, but never before
 The gold dust of thy bloom-divine
 Hath dropped from thy heart into mine,
 To quicken its faint germs of heavenly lore;
 For no breeze comes nigh thee but carries away
 Some impulses bright
 Of fragrance and light,
 Which fall upon souls that are lone and astray,
 To plant fruitful hopes of the flower of day.

ODE.

I.

IN the old days of awe and keen-eyed wonder,
 The Poet's song with blood-warm truth was rife;
 He saw the mysteries which circle under
 The outward shell and skin of daily life.
 Nothing to him were fleeting time and fashion,
 His soul was led by the eternal law;
 There was in him no hope of fame, no passion,
 But with calm, godlike eyes he only saw.
 He did not sigh o'er heroes dead and buried,
 Chief-mourner at the Golden Age's hearse,
 Nor deem that souls whom Charon grim had ferried
 Alone were fitting themes of epic verse;
 He could believe the promise of to-morrow,
 And feel the wondrous meaning of to-day;
 He had a deeper faith in holy sorrow
 Than the world's seeming loss could take away.
 To know the heart of all things was his duty,
 All things did sing to him to make him wise,
 And, with a sorrowful and conquering beauty,
 The soul of all looked grandly from his eyes.
 He gazed on all within him and without him,
 He watched the flowing of Time's steady tide,
 And shapes of glory floated all about him
 And whispered to him, and he prophesied.
 Than all men he more fearless was and freer,
 And ail his brethren cried with one accord,—
 "Behold the holy man! Behold the Seer!"
 Him who hath spoken with the unseen Lord!"
 He to his heart with large embrace had taken
 The universal sorrow of mankind,
 And, from that root, a shelter never shaken,

The tree of wisdom grew with sturdy rind.
 He could interpret well the wondrous voices
 Which to the calm and silent spirit come;
 He knew that the One Soul no more rejoices
 In the star's anthem than the insect's hum.
 He in his heart was ever meek and humble,
 And yet with kingly pomp his numbers ran,
 As he foresaw how all things false should crumble
 Before the free, uplifted soul of man:
 And, when he was made full to overflowing
 With all the loveliness of heaven and earth,
 Out rushed his song, like molten iron glowing,
 To show God sitting by the humblest hearth.
 With calmest courage he was ever ready
 To teach that action was the truth of thought,
 And, with strong arm and purpose firm and steady,
 The anchor of the drifting world he wrought.
 So did he make the meanest man partaker
 Of all his brother-gods unto him gave;
 All souls did reverence him and name him Maker,
 And when he died heaped temples on his grave.
 And still his deathless words of light are swimming
 Serene throughout the great deep infinite
 Of human soul, unwaning and undimming,
 To cheer and guide the mariner at night.

II.

But now the Poet is an empty rhymer
 Who lies with idle elbow on the grass,
 And fits his singing, like a cunning timer,
 To all men's prides and fancies as they pass.
 Not his the song, which, in its metre holy,
 Chimes with the music of the eternal stars,
 Humbling the tyrant, lifting up the lowly,
 And sending sun through the soul's prison-bars.
 Maker no more,—O no! unmaker rather,
 For he unmakes who doth not all put forth
 The power given by our loving Father
 To show the body's dross, the spirit's worth.
 Awake! great spirit of the ages olden!
 Shiver the mists that hide thy starry lyre,
 And let man's soul be yet again beholden
 To thee for wings to soar to her desire.
 O, prophesy no more to-morrow's splendor,
 Be no more shamefaced to speak out for Truth,



"BUT NOW THE POET IS AN EMPTY
RHYMER WHO LIES WITH IDLE
ELBOW ON THE GRASS."

Lay on her altar all the gushings tender,
The hope, the fire, the loving faith of youth!
O, prophesy no more the Maker's coming,
Say not his onward footsteps thou canst hear
In the dim void, like to the awful humming
Of the great wings of some new-lighted sphere!
O, prophesy no more, but be the Poet!
This longing was but granted unto thee
That, when all beauty thou couldst feel and know it,
That beauty in its highest thou couldst be.
O thou who moanest tost with sealike longings,
Who dimly hearest voices call on thee,
Whose soul is overfilled with mighty throngings
Of love, and fear, and glorious agony,
Thou of the toil-strung hands and iron sinews
And soul by Mother Earth with freedom fed,
In whom the hero-spirit yet continues,
The old free nature is not chained or dead,
Arouse! let thy soul break in music-thunder,
Let loose the ocean that is in thee pent,
Pour forth thy hope, thy fear, thy love, thy wonder,
And tell the age what all its signs have meant.

Where'er thy wildered crowd of brethren jostles,
 Where'er there lingers but a shade of wrong,
 There still is need of martyrs and apostles,
 There still are texts for never-dying song:
 From age to age man's still aspiring spirit
 Finds wider scope and sees with clearer eyes,
 And thou in larger measure dost inherit
 What made thy great forerunners free and wise.
 Sit thou enthronèd where the Poet's mountain
 Above the thunder lifts its silent peak,
 And roll thy songs down like a gathering fountain,
 They all may drink and find the rest they seek.
 Sing! there shall silence grow in earth and heaven,
 A silence of deep awe and wondering;
 For, listening gladly, bend the angels, even,
 To hear a mortal like an angel sing.

III.

Among the toil-worn poor my soul is seeking
 For one to bring the Maker's name to light,
 To be the voice of that almighty speaking
 Which every age demands to do it right.
 Proprieties our silken bards environ;
 He who would be the tongue of this wide land
 Must string his harp with chords of sturdy iron
 And strike it with a toil-embrownèd hand;
 One who hath dwelt with nature well attended,
 Who hath learnt wisdom from her mystic books,
 Whose soul with all her countless lives hath blended,
 So that all beauty awes us in his looks;
 Who not with body's waste his soul hath pampered,
 Who as the clear northwestern wind is free,
 Who walks with Form's observances unhampered,
 And follows the One Will obediently;
 Whose eyes, like windows on a breezy summit,
 Control a lovely prospect every way;
 Who doth not sound God's sea with earthly plummet,
 And find a bottom still of worthless clay;
 Who heeds not how the lower gusts are working,
 Knowing that one sure wind blows on above,
 And sees, beneath the foulest faces lurking,
 One God-built shrine of reverence and love;
 Who sees all stars that wheel their shining marches
 Around the centre fixed of Destiny,
 Where the encircling soul serene o'erarches

The moving globe of being like a sky;
 Who feels that God and Heaven's great deeps are
 nearer
 Him to whose heart his fellow-man is nigh,
 Who doth not hold his soul's own freedom dearer
 Than that of all his brethren, low or high;
 Who to the Right can feel himself the truer
 For being gently patient with the wrong,
 Who sees a brother in the evil-doer,
 And finds in Love the heart's-blood of his song;—
 This, this is he for whom the world is waiting
 To sing the beatings of its mighty heart,
 Too long hath it been patient with the grating
 Of scrannel-pipes, and heard it misnamed Art.
 To him the smiling soul of man shall listen,
 Laying awhile its crown of thorns aside,
 And once again in every eye shall glisten
 The glory of a nature satisfied.
 His verse shall have a great commanding motion,
 Heaving and swelling with a melody
 Learnt of the sky, the river, and the ocean,
 And all the pure, majestic things that be.
 Awake, then, thou! we pine for thy great presence
 To make us feel the soul once more sublime,
 We are of far too infinite an essence
 To rest contented with the lies of Time.
 Speak out! and lo! a hush of deepest wonder
 Shall sink o'er all his many-voicèd scene,
 As when a sudden burst of rattling thunder
 Shatters the blueness of a sky serene.

A REQUIEM.

AY, pale and silent maiden,
 Cold as thou liest there,
 Thine was the sunniest nature
 That ever drew the air,
 The wildest and most wayward,
 And yet so gently kind,
 Thou seemedst but to body
 A breath of summer wind.

Into the eternal shadow
 That girds our life around,
 Into the infinite silence

Wherewith Death's shore is bound,
 Thou hast gone forth, beloved!
 And I were mean to weep,
 That thou hast left Life's shallows,
 And dost possess the Deep.

Thou liest low and silent,
 Thy heart is cold and still,
 Thine eyes are shut forever,
 And Death hath had his will;
 He loved and would have taken,
 I loved and would have kept,
 We strove,—and he was stronger,
 And I have never wept.

Let him possess thy body,
 Thy soul is still with me,
 More sunny and more gladsome
 Than it was wont to be:
 Thy body was a fetter
 That bound me to the flesh,
 Thank God that it is broken,
 And now I live afresh!

Now I can see thee clearly;
 The dusky cloud of clay,
 That hid thy starry spirit,
 Is rent and blown away:
 To earth I give thy body,
 Thy spirit to the sky,
 I saw its bright wings growing
 And knew that thou must fly.

Now I can love thee truly,
 For nothing comes between
 The senses and the spirit,
 The seen and the unseen;
 Lifts the eternal shadow,
 The silence burst apart,
 And the soul's boundless future
 Is present in my heart.

RHŒCUS.

GOD sends his teachers unto every age,
 To every clime, and every race of men,
 With revelations fitted to their growth

And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth.
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
 Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
 The life of man, and given it to grasp
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
 Enfolds some germs of goodness and of right;
 Else never had the eager soul, which loathes
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
 Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart
 Which makes that all the fables it hath coined,
 To justify the reign of its belief
 And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,
 Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
 Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,
 Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.
 For, as in nature naught is made in vain,
 But all things have within their hull of use
 A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
 Of spiritual secrets to the ear
 Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er the heart
 Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,
 To make its inspirations suit its creed,
 And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring
 Its needful food of truth, there ever is
 A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
 Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light
 And earnest parables of inward lore.
 Here now this fairy legend of old Greece,
 As full of freedom, youth and beauty still
 As the immortal freshness of that grace
 Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhœcus, wandering in the wood,
 Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
 And feeling pity of so fair a tree,
 He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
 And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
 But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
 That murmured "Rhœcus!" 'T was as if the leaves
 Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,
 And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
 It murmured "Rhœcus!" softer than a breeze,
 He started and beheld with dizzy eyes
 What seemed the substance of a happy dream

Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
 Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.
 It seemed a woman's shape, yet all too fair
 To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
 For any that were wont to mate with gods.
 All naked like a goddess stood she there,
 And like a goddess all too beautiful
 To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
 "Rhæcus, I am the Dryad of this tree."
 Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
 Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,
 "And with it I am doomed to live and die;
 The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
 Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
 Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
 And with a thankful joy it shall be thine,"

Then Rhæcus, with a flutter at the heart,
 Yet, by the promptings of such beauty, bold,
 Answered: "What is there that can satisfy
 The endless craving of the soul but love?
 Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
 Which must be evermore my spirit's goal."
 After a little pause she said again,
 But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
 "I give it, Rhæcus, though a perilous gift;
 An hour before the sunset meet me here."
 And straightway there was nothing he could see
 But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
 And not a sound came to his straining ears
 But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
 And far away upon an emerald slope
 The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now in those days of simpleness and faith,
 Men did not think that happy things were dreams
 Because they overstepped the narrow bourne
 Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
 Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
 To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
 So Rhæcus made no doubt that he was blest,
 And all along unto the city's gate
 Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,
 The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
 And he could scarce believe he had not wings,



"RHECUS, I AM THE DRYAD OF THIS TREE."

Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins
Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhæcus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much,
And, taking with blithe welcome whatso'er
Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,
Like the contented peasant of a vale,
Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.
So haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them, and forgot a'1 else beside.



"SOME COMRADES WHO WERE PLAYING AT THE DICE."

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhæcus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw.
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-drooped legs
As if to light. And Rhæcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,
"By Venus! does he take me for a rose?"

And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand,
 But still the bee came back, and thrice again,
 Rhœcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
 Then through the window flew the wounded bee,
 And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
 Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
 Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
 And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
 As if its very walls had caved away.
 Without a word, he turned, and, rushing forth,
 Ran madly through the city and the gate,
 And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,
 By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
 Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall. .

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,
 And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
 The low voice murmur "Rhœcus!" close at hand;
 Wherat he looked around him, but could see
 Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.
 Then sighed the voice, "O Rhœcus! nevermore
 Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
 Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love
 More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
 Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:
 But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
 And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings.
 We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
 We ever ask an undivided love,
 And he who scorns the least of Nature's works
 Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all,
 Farewell! for thou canst never see me more!"

Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,
 And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet
 This once, and I shall never need it more?"
 "Alas!" the voice returned, "'t is thou art blind,
 Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
 But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
 Only the soul hath power o'er itself."
 With that again there murmured "Nevermore!"
 And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
 Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
 Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
 Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
 The night had gathered round him; o'er the plain

The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened and on his forehead smote the breeze;
Beauty was all around him and delight,
But from that eve he was alone on earth.

So in our youth we shape out noble ends,
And worship beauty with such earnest faith
As but the young, unwasted heart can know,
And, haply wandering into some good deed,
Win for our souls a moment's sight of Truth.
Then the sly world runs up to us and smiles,
And takes us by the hand and cries, "Well met!
Come play with me at dice; one lucky throw,
And all my power and glory shall be thine;
Stake but thy heart upon the other side!"
So we turn gaily in, and by degrees
Lose all our nature's broad inheritance,—
The happiness content with homely things,—
The wise simplicity of honest faith,—
The unsuspecting gentleness of heart,—
The open-handed grace of Charity,—
The love of Beauty, and the deathless hope
To be her chosen almoner on earth.
And we rise up at last with wrinkled brows,
Most deeply-learned in the hollow game
At which we now have nothing left to stake,
Albeit too wise to stake it, if we had.

But Truth will never let the heart alone
That once hath sought her, sending o'er and o'er
Her sweet and unreprouched messengers
To lure us back again and give us all,
Which we, all fresh and burning in the game,
Wherein we lose and lose with seeming gain,
Brush off impatiently with sharp rebuff,
Feeling our better instincts now no more
But as reproaches lacking other aim
Than to abridge our little snatch of bliss,
And, when we rouse at length, and feel within
The stirring of our ancient love again,
Our eyes are blinded that we cannot see
The fair benignity of unveiled Truth

That plighted us its holy troth erewhile
 Our sun is setting. we are just too late;
 And so, instead of lightening by our lives
 The general burden of our drooping kind—
 Instead of being named in aftertime
 With grateful reverence as men who talked
 With spirits, and the dreaded secret wrung
 From out the loath lips of the sphinx of life,—
 Instead of being, as all true men may,
 Part of the memory of all great deeds,
 The inspiration of all time to come,
 We linger to our graves with empty hearts,
 And add our little handful to the soil
 As valueless and frail as fallen leaves.

 COLUMBUS.

THE cordage creaks and rattles in the wind,
 With freaks of sudden hush; the reeling sea
 Now thumps like solid rock beneath the stern,
 Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes short, and, falling
 Crumbled to whispery foam, slips rustling down
 The broad backs of the waves, which jostle and crowd
 To fling themselves upon that unknown shore,
 Their used familiar since the dawn of time,
 Wither this foredoomed life—an eminent surge
 Chance-heaped a breath's space o'er the weltering press,
 With deeper grip clutching the tide's green mane
 And later-weaned from the mid-ocean's breast,
 Yet not less frail than the individual shape
 By vanishing water worn—is guided on
 To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring poise
 One glittering moment, then to break fulfilled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,
 The melancholy wash of endless waves,
 The sigh of some grim monster undescribed,
 Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,
 Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine!
 Yet night brings more companions than the day
 To this drear waste; new constellations burn,
 And fairer stars, with whose calm height my soul
 Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd
 Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring
 Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings

Against the cold bars of their unbelief,
Knowing in vain my own free heaven beyond.
O God! this world, so crammed with eager life,
That comes and goes and wanders back to silence
Like the idle wind, which yet man's shaping mind
Can make his drudge to swell the longing sails
Of highest endeavor,—this mad, unthrift world,
Which, every hour, throws life enough away
To make her deserts kind and hospitable,
Lets her great destinies be waved aside
By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,
Who weigh the God they not believe with gold,
And find no spot in Judas, save that he,
Driving a duller bargain than he ought,
Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.
O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite
Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer
Hath oftentimes shot chill palsy through the arm
Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,
And made the firm-based heart, that would have quailed
The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf
Wrinkled with frost, and loose upon its stem.
The wicked and the weak, by some dark law,
Have a strange power to shut and rivet down
Their own horizon round us, to unwing
Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur
With surly clouds the Future's gleaming peaks,
Far seen across the brine of thankless years.
If the chosen soul could never be alone
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done;
Among dull hearts a prophet never grew;
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete; there man with man
Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,
Life is trod under foot,—Life, the one block
Of marble that's vouchsafed wherefrom to carve
Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to shine down
The future, Life, the irredeemable block,
Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,
Scanting our room to cut the features out
Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown
With a mean head the perfect limbs, or leave
The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,
Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world
Reels on to judgment ; there the common need,
Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond
Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowlingly
O'er his own selfish hoard at bay ; no state,
Knit strongly with eternal fibres up
Of all men's separate and united weals,
Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as light,
Holds up a shape of large Humanity
To which by natural instinct every man
Pays loyalty exulting, by which all
Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses filled
With the red, fiery blood of the general life,
Making them mighty in peace, as now in war
They are, even in the flush of victory, weak,
Conquering that manhood which should them subdue.
And what gift bring I to this untried world?
Shall the same tragedy be played anew,
And the same lurid curtain drop at last
On one dread desolation, one fierce crash
Of that recoil which on its makers God
Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,
Early or late? Or shall that commonwealth
Whose potent unity and concentric force
Can draw these scattered joints and parts of men
Into a whole ideal man once more,
Which sucks not from its limbs the life away,
But sends it flood-tide and creates itself
Over again in every citizen,
Be there built up? For me, I have no choice ;
I might turn back to other destinies,
For one sincere key opes all Fortune's doors ;
But whoso answers not God's earliest call
Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme
Of lying open to his genius
Which makes the wise heart certain of its ends.

Here am I, for what end God knows, not I ;
Westward still points the inexorable soul ;
Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,
The beating heart of this great enterprise,
Which, without me, would stiffen in swift death ;
This have I mused on, since mine eye could first
Among the stars distinguish and with joy
Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,
On some blue promontory of heaven lighted

That juts far out into the upper sea ;
To this one hope my heart hath clung for years,
As would a foundling to the talisman
Hung round his neck by hands he knew not whose
A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,
Yet he therein can feel a virtue left
By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,
And unto him it still is tremulous
With palpitating haste and wet with tears,
The key to him of hope and humanness,
The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.
This hope hath been to me for love and fame,
Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,
Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,
Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit burned,
Conquering its little island from the Dark,
Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's steps,
In the far hurry of the outward world,
Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in dream.
As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched up
From the gross sod to be Jove's cup-bearer,
So was I lifted by my great design :
And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye
Fades not that broader outlook of the gods ;
His life's low valleys overbrow earth's clouds,
And that Olympian spectre of the past
Looms towering up in sovereign memory,
Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of doom.
Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's bird,
Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me
A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,
Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low ends ;
Great days have ever such a morning-red,
On such a base great futures are built up,
And aspiration, though not put in act,
Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,
Still watches round its grave the unlaid ghost
Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,
Save that implacable one, seem thin and bleak
As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,
Bound freezing there by the un pitying moon.

While other youths perplexed their mandolins,
Praying that Thetis would her fingers twine
In the loose glories of her lover's hair,

And wile another kiss to keep back day,
 I, stretched beneath the many-centuried shade
 Of some writhed oak, the wood's Laocoon,
 Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,
 Whom I would woo to meet me privily,
 Or underneath the stars, or when
 the moon
 Flecked all the forest floor with scat-
 tered pearls.
 O days whose memory tames to
 fawning down



"WHILE OTHER YOUTHS PER-
 PLEXED THEIR MANDOLINS."

The surly fell of Ocean's
 bristled neck!

I know not when this hope
 enthralled me first,
 But from my boyhood up
 I loved to hear

The tall pine-forests of the Apennine
 Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,
 Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld
 The sudden dark of tropic night shut down
 O'er the huge whisper of great watery wastes,
 The while a pair of herons trailingy
 Flapped inland, where some league-wide river hurled
 The yellow spoil of unconjectured realms
 Far through a gulf's green silence, never scarred

By any but the North-wind's hurrying keels.
 And not the pines alone; all sights and sounds
 To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,
 And catered for it as the Cretan bees
 Brought honey to the baby Jupiter,
 Who in his soft hand crushed a violet,



"THE WHILE A PAIR OF HERONS
 TRAILINGLY FLAPPED.

Godlike foremusing the
 rough thunder's
 gripe;

Then did I entertain
 the poet's song,
 My great Idea's guest,
 and, passing o'er
 That iron bridge the
 Tuscan built to hell,
 I heard Ulysses tell of
 mountain-chains

Whose adamantine links, his manacles,
 The western main shook growling, and still gnawed.
 I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale
 Of happy Atlantis, and heard Björne's keel
 Crunch the gray pebbles of the Vinland shore:
 For I believe the poets; it is they
 Who utter wisdom from the central deep,
 And, listening to the inner flow of things,
 Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me! old hermits sought for solitude
 In caves and desert places of the earth,
 Where their own heart-beat was the only stir
 Of living thing that comforted the year;
 But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,
 In midnight's blankest waste, were populous,
 Matched with the isolation drear and deep
 Of him who pines among the swarm of men,
 At once a new thought's king and prisoner.
 Feeling the truer life within his life,
 The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,
 Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop,
 In the ungrateful sands of sceptic ears.
 He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods
 Doth walk a king; for him the pent-up cell
 Widens beyond the circles of the stars,
 And all the sceptred spirits of the past
 Come thronging in to greet him as their peer;

While, like an heir new-crowned, his heart o'erleaps
The blazing steps of his ancestral throne;
But in the market-place's glare and throng
He sits apart, an exile, and his brow
Aches with the mocking memory of its crown.
But to the spirit select there is no choice;
He cannot say, This will I do, or that,
For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends in pawn,
And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern
Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields
That yield no crop of self-denying will;
A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,
Which grasping without question, he is led
Where there is work that he must do for God.
The trial still is the strength's complement,
And the uncertain, dizzy path that seals
The sheer heights of supremest purposes
Is steeper to the angel than the child.
Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,
And disappointment's dry and bitter root,
Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool
Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk
To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind,
And break a pathway to those unknown realms
That in the earth's broad shadow lie enthralled,
Endurance is the crowning quality,
And patience all the passion of great hearts;
These are their stay, and when the leaden world
Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,
And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,
Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale,
The inspired soul but flings his patience in,
And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe, —
One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind.
Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear
The voice that errs not; then my triumph gleams,
O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all night
My heart flies on before me as I sail;
Far on I see my lifelong enterprise,
Which rose like Ganges 'mid the freezing snows
Of a world's sordidness, sweep broadening down,
And, gathering to itself a thousand streams
Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea;
I see the ungated wall of chaos old,

With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night,
 Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist
 Before the irreversible feet of light;—
 And lo, with what clear omen in the east
 One day's gray threshold stands the eager dawn,
 Like young Leander rosy from the sea
 Glowing at Hero's lattice!

One day more

These muttering shoalbrains leave the helm to me:
 God, let me not in their dull ooze be stranded;
 Let not this one frail bark, to hollow which
 I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart
 Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so
 Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,
 Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off
 His cheek-swollen mates, and from the leaning mast
 Fortune's full sail strains forward!

One poor day!—

Remember whose and not how short it is!
 It is God's day, it is Columbus's.
 A lavish day! One day, with life and heart,
 Is more than time enough to find a world.

HUNGER AND COLD.

SISTERS two, all praise to you,
 With your faces pinched and blue;
 To the poor man you've been true
 From of old:
 You can speak the keenest word,
 You are sure of being heard.
 From the point you've never stirred,
 Hunger and Cold!

Let sleek statesmen temporize:
 Palsied are their shifts and lies
 When they meet your bloodshot eyes,
 Grim and bold;
 Policy you set at naught,
 In their traps you'll not be caught,
 You're too honest to be bought,
 Hunger and Cold.

Bolt and bar the palace door ;
 While the mass of men are poor,
 Naked truth grows more and more
 Uncontrolled ;
 You had never yet, I guess,
 Any praise for bashfulness,
 You can visit sans court-dress,
 Hunger and Cold !

While the music fell and rose,
 And the dance reeled to its close,
 Where her round of costly woes
 Fashion strolled,
 I beheld with shuddering fear
 Wolves' eyes through the windows peer ;
 Little dream they you are near,
 Hunger and Cold !

When the toiler's heart you clutch,
 Conscience is not valued much,
 He recks not a bloody smutch
 On his gold :
 Everything to you defers,
 You are potent reasoners,
 At your whisper Treason stirs,
 Hunger and Cold !

Rude comparisons you draw,
 Words refuse to sate your maw,
 Your gaunt limbs the cobweb law
 Cannot hold :
 You're not clogged with foolish pride,
 But can seize a right denied :
 Somehow God is on your side,
 Hunger and Cold !

You respect no hoary wrong
 More for having triumphed long ;
 Its past victims, haggard throng,
 From the mould
 You unbury : swords and spears
 Weaker are than poor men's tears,
 Weaker than your silent years,
 Hunger and Cold !

The Landlord.

Let them guard both hall and bower :
 Through the window you will glower,
 Patient till your reckoning hour
 Shall be tolled ;
 Cheeks are pale, but hands are red,
 Guiltless blood may chance be shed,
 But ye must and will be fed,
 Hunger and Cold !

God has plans man must not spoil,
 Some were made to starve and toil,
 Some to share the wine and oil,
 We are told :
 Devil's theories are these,
 Stifling hope and love and peace,
 Framed your hideous lusts to please,
 Hunger and Cold !

Scatter ashes on thy head,
 Tears of burning sorrow shed,
 Earth ! and be by pity led
 To Love's fold ;
 Ere they block the very door,
 With lean corpses of the poor,
 And will hush for naught but gore,
 Hunger and Cold !

1844.

THE LANDLORD.

WHAT boot your houses and your lands ?
 In spite of close-drawn deed and fence,
 Like water, 'twixt your cheated hands,
 They slip into the graveyard's sands,
 And mock your ownership's pretence.

How shall you speak to urge your right,
 Choked with that soil for which you lust ?
 The bit of clay, for whose delight
 You grasp, is mortgaged, too ; Death might
 Foreclose this very day in dust.

Fence as you please, this plain poor man,
 Whose only fields are in his wit,
 Who shapes the world, as best he can,

According to God's higher plan,
Owns you, and fences as is fit.

Though yours the rents, his incomes wax
By right of eminent domain;
From factory tall to woodman's axe,
All things on earth must pay their tax,
To feed his hungry heart and brain.

He takes you from your easy-chair,
And what he plans that you must do;
You sleep in down, eat dainty fare,—
He mounts his crazy garret-stair
And starves, the land'ord over you.

Feeding the clods your idlesse drains,
You make more green six feet of soil,
His fruitful word, like suns and rains,
Partakes the seasons' bounteous pains,
And toils to lighten human toil.

Your lands, with force or cunning got,
Shrink to the measure of the grave;
But Death himself abridges not
The tenures of almighty thought,
The titles of the wise and brave.

TO A PINE-TREE.

FAR up on Katahdin thou towerest,
Purple-blue with the distance and vast;
Like a cloud o'er the lowlands thou lowerest,
That hangs poised on a lull in the blast,
To its fall leaning awful.

In the storm, like a prophet o'ermaddened,
Thou singest and tосsest thy branches;
Thy heart with the terror is gladdened,
Thou forebodest the dread avalanches,
When whole mountains swoop valeward.

In the calm thou o'erstretchest the valleys
With thine arms, as if blessings imploring,
Like an old king led forth from his palace,
When his people to battle are pouring
From the city beneath him.

To the lumberer asleep 'neath thy blooming
 Thou dost sing of wild billows in motion.
 Till he longs to be swung mid their booming
 In the tents of the Arabs of ocean,
 Whose finned isles are their cattle.

For the gale snatches thee for his lyre,
 With mad hand crashing melody frantic,
 While he pours forth his mighty desire
 To leap down on the eager Atlantic,
 Whose arms stretch to his playmate.



The wild storm makes his lair in thy
 branches.
 And thence preys on the continent
 under;
 Like a lion, crouched close on his
 haunches,
 There awaiteth his leap the fierce
 thunder,
 Growling low with impatience.

Spite of winter, thou keep'st thy green
 glory,
 Lusty father of Titans past number;
 The snow-flakes alone make thee
 hoary,
 Nestling close to thy branches in
 slumber,
 And thee mantling with silence.

Thou alone know'st the splendor of
 winter,
 Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed pre-
 cipices,
 Hearing craggs of green ice groan and
 splinter,
 And then plunge down the muffled
 abysses
 In the quiet of midnight.

Thou alone know'st the glory of summer,
 Gazing down on thy broad seas of forest,
 On thy subjects that send a proud murmur
 Up to thee, to their sachem, who towerest
 From thy bleak throne to heaven.

"FOR THE GALE SNATCHES THEE FOR
 HIS LYRE."

SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES.

O, WANDERING dim on the extremest edge
 Of God's bright providence, whose spirits sigh
 Drearly in you, like the winter sedge
 That shivers o'er the dead pool stiff and dry,
 A thin, sad voice, when the bold wind roars by
 From the clear North of Duty,—
 Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I trace
 That here was once a shrine and holy place
 Of the supernal Beauty,
 A child's play-altar reared of stones and moss,
 With wilted flowers for offering laid across,
 Mute recognition of the all-ruling Grace.

How far are ye from the innocent, from those
 Whose hearts are as a little lane serene,
 Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with unbroke snows,
 Or in the summer blithe with lamb-cropped green,
 Save the one track, where naught more rude is seen
 Than the plump wain at even
 Bringing home four months' sunshine bound in sheaves!
 How far are ye from those! yet who believes
 That ye can shut out heaven?
 Your souls partake its influence, not in vain
 Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane
 Its drift of noiseless apple-blooms receives.

Looking within myself, I note how thin
 A plank of station, chance, or prosperous fate,
 Doth fence me from the clutching waves of sin:
 In my own heart I find the worst man's mate,
 And see not dimly the smooth-hinged gate
 That opes to those abysses
 Where ye grope darkly,—ye who never knew
 On your young hearts love's consecrating dew,
 Or felt a mother's kisses,
 Or home's restraining tendrils round you curled;
 Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this world
 The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue!

One band ye cannot break,—the force that clips
 And grasps your circles to the central light;
 Yours is the prodigal comet's long ellipse,
 Self-exiled to the farthest verge of night;
 Yet strives with you no less that inward might

No sin hath e'er imbruted;
 The god in you the creed-dimmed eye eludes;
 The Law brooks not to have its solitudes
 By bigot feet polluted,
 Yet they who watch your God-compelled return
 May see your happy perihelion burn
 Where the calm sun his untledged planets broods.



TO THE PAST.

WONDROUS and awful are thy silent halls,
 O kingdom of the past!
 There lie the bygone ages in their palls,
 Guarded by shadows vast:
 There all is hushed and breathless,
 Save when some image of old error falls
 Earth worshipped once as deathless.

There sits drear Egypt, mid beleaguered sands,
 Half woman and half beast,
 The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands
 That once lit all the East,
 A dotard bleared and hoary,
 There Asser crouches o'er the blackened brands
 Of Asia's long-quenched glory.

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea
 Thy courts and temples stand;
 Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry
 Of saints and heroes grand,
 Thy phantasms grope and shiver,
 Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently
 Into Time's gnawing river.

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,
Of their old godhead lorn,
Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,
Which they misdeem for morn;
And yet the eternal sorrow
In their unmonarched eyes says day is done
Without the hope of morrow.

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,
The shapes that haunt thy gloom
Make signs to us and move their withered lips
Across the gulf of doom;
Yet all their sound and motion
Bring no more fright to us than wraiths of ships
On the mirage's ocean.

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth
From out thy desolate halls,
If some grim shadow of thy living death
Across our sunshine falls
And scares the world to error,
The eternal life sends forth melodious breath
To chase the misty terror.

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-noised deeds
Are silent now in dust,
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds
Beneath some sudden gust;
Thy forms and creeds have vanished,
Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds
From the world's garden banished.

Whatever of true life there was in thee
Leaps in our age's veins;
Wield still thy bent and wrinkled empery,
And shake thine idle chains;—
To thee thy dross is clinging,
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,
Thy poets still are singing.

Here, mid the bleak waves of our strife and care,
Float the green Fortunate Isles
Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share
Our martyrdoms and toils;
The present moves attended
With all of brave and excellent and fair
That made the old time splendid.

HEBE.

I SAW the twinkle of white feet,
I saw the flash of robes descending;
Before her ran an influence fleet,
That bowed my heart like barley bending.



"I SAW THE BRIMMED BOWL IN HER GRASP."

As, in bare fields, the searching bees
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,

It led me on, by sweet degrees
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates;
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;
The long-sought Secret's golden gates
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp
Thrilling with godhood; like a lover
I sprang the proffered life to clasp;—
The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?
Can Summer fill the icy cup,
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;
Their nectar crowns the lips of Patience;
Haste scatters on unthankful sods
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,
And shuns the hands would seize upon her;
Follow thy life, and she will sue
To pour for thee the cup of honor.

THE SEARCH.

I WENT to seek for Christ,
And Nature seemed so fair
That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,
And I was sure to find him there:
The temple I forsook,
And to the solitude
Allegiance paid; but Winter came and shook
The crown and purple from my wood;
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,
Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate;
My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn rift,
But epitaphed her own sepulchred state:
Then I remembered whom I went to seek,
And blessed blunt Winter for his council bleak.

The Search.

Back to the world I turned,
 For Christ, I said, is King;
 So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,
 As far beneath his sojourning:
 Mid power and wealth I sought,
 But found no trace of him,
 And all the costly offerings I had brought
 With sudden rust and mould grew dim:
 I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,
 All must on stated days themselves imprison,
 Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,
 Witless how long the life had thence arisen;
 Due sacrifice to this they set apart,
 Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

So from my feet the dust
 Of the proud World I shook;
 Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust,
 And half my sorrow's burden took.
 After the World's soft bed,
 Its rich and dainty fare,
 Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,
 His cheap food seemed as manna rare;
 Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,
 Turned to the heedless city whence I came,
 Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet
 Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same:
 Love looked me in the face and spake no words,
 But straight I knew those footprints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,
 And in a hovel rude,
 With naught to fence the weather from his head,
 The King I sought for meekly stood;
 A naked, hungry child
 Clung round his gracious knee,
 And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
 To bless the smile that set him free;
 New miracles I saw his presence do,—
 No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,
 The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,
 The broken morsel swelled to goodly store;
 I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,
 His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's
aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him
climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous
throe,
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro ;
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the
Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a chill,
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming ill,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies with
God
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by the sod,
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or
wrong ;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or
shame ;—
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side ;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom
or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the
right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that
light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt
stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against
our land ?

Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments see,
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through Oblivion's
sea;

Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding cry
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose feet earth's
chaff must fly;

Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment hath
passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the
Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim un-
known,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate,
But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within,—
"They enslave their children's children who make compromise
with sin."

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of the giant brood,
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched the
earth with blood,

Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer day,
Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable prey;—
Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched
crust,

Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be
just;

Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands
aside,

Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—they were souls that
stood alone,

While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
 Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
 To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
 By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme
 design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track
 Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not
 back,
 And these mounts of anguish number how each generation
 learned
 One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-hearts hath
 burned
 Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven
 upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward : where to-day the martyr stands,
 On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands ;
 Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
 While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
 To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
 Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves,
 Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime ;—
 Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by men be-
 hind their time ?
 Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make Plymouth
 Rock sublime ?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
 Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's ;
 But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made
 us free,
 Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee
 The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across
 the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them ; we are traitors to our
 sires,
 Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-fires ;
 Shall we make their creed our jailer ? Shall we in our haste to
 slay,
 From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps
 away
 To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day ?

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
 They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast
 of Truth;
 Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims
 be,
 Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate
 winter sea,
 Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted
 key.

December, 1844.

AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE.

WHAT visionary tints the year puts on,
 When falling leaves falter through motionless air
 Or numbly cling and shiver to be gone!
 How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,
 As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills
 The bowl between me and those distant hills,
 And smiles and shakes abroad her misty, tremulous hair!

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,
 Making me poorer in my poverty,
 But mingles with my senses and my heart;
 My own projected spirit seems to me
 In her own reverie the world to steep;
 'T is she that waves to sympathetic sleep,
 Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,
 Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,
 Each into each, the hazy distances!
 The softened season all the landscape charms;
 Those hills, my native village that embay,
 In waves of dreamier purple roll away,
 And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee
 Close at my side; far distant sound the leaves;
 The fields seem fields of dream, where Memory
 Wanders like gleaming Ruth; and as the sheaves
 Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye
 Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,
 So tremble and seem remote all things the sense receives.

The cock's shrill trump that tells of scattered corn,
Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,
Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,
Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits;
Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails;
Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,
With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,
Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer;
The squirrel, on the shingly shag-bark's bough,
Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,
Then drops his nut, and with a chipping bound
Whisks to his winding fastness underground;
The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed
meadows;
The single crow a single caw lets fall;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon will be,
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and ladylike of trees,
Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,
And hints at her foregone gentilities
With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves;
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,
As one who prouder to a falling fortune cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,
Who, mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,
With distant eye broods over other sights,
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,
And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,
After the first betrayal of the frost,
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;

The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,
 To the faint summer, beggared now and old,
 Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly
 And sadly, breaking not the general hush;
 The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,
 Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush;
 And round the wood's edge creeps the skirting blaze
 Of bushes low, as when on cloudy days,
 Ere the rain falls, the cautious farmer burns his brush.



“ERE THE RAIN FALLS, THE CAUTIOUS FARMER BURNS HIS BRUSH.”

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,
 Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks intertwine
 Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone
 Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,
 The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves
 A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;
 Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alder shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling boundary,
 Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the ploughboy's foot,

Who, with each sense shut fast except the eye,
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to shoot,
The woodbine up the elm's straight stem aspires,
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal fires;
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak stands mute.

Below, the Charles—a strip of nether sky,
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying by,
Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,
Then spreading out, at his next turn beyond,
A silver circle like an inland pond—
Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and green.

Dear marshes! vain to him the gift of sight
Who cannot in their various incomes share,
From every season drawn, of shade and light,
Who sees in them but levels brown and bare;
Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free
On them its largess of variety,
For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of green,
O'er which the light winds run with glimmering feet:
Here, yellower stripes track out the creek unseen,
There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches meet;
And purpler stains show where the blossoms crowd,
As if the silent shadow of a cloud
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,
Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,
Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge;
Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,
Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,
And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run
Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

In Summer 't is a blithesome sight to see,
As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,
The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,
Their sharp scythes panting through the thick set grass;
Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,
Their nooning take, while one begins to sing
A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,
 Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops
 Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,
 And 'twixt the winrows most demurely drops,
 A decorous bird of business, who provides
 For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,
 And looks from right to left, a farmer mid his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,
 But saddens not; they still show merrier tints,
 Though sober russet seems to cover all;
 When the first sunshine through their dew-drops glints,
 Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,
 Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,
 As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy prints.

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,
 Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,
 While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,
 Glow opposite;—the marshes drink their fill
 And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade
 Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the shade,
 Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simond's darkening hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,
 Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,
 And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts,
 While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,
 Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,
 And until bedtime plays with his desire,
 Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates;—

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright
 With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,
 By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,
 'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,
 Giving a pretty emblem of the day
 When guiltier arms in light shall melt away,
 And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's cramp-
 ing mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river
 Twice every day creates on either side
 Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they shiver
 In grass-arched channels to the sun denied;

High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,
The silvered flats gleam frostily below,
Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

But crowned in turn by vying seasons three,
Their winter halo hath a fuller ring;
This glory seems to rest immovably,—
The others were too fleet and vanishing;



"TRYING EACH BUCKLE AND STRAP BESIDE THE FIRE."

When the hid tide is at its highest flow,
O'er marsh and stream one breathless trance of snow
With brooding fulness awes and hushes everything.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak wind,
As pale as formal candles lit by day;
Gropes to the sea the river dumb and blind;

The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the storm in play,
Show pearly breakers combing o'er their lee,
White crests as of some just enchanted sea,
Checked in their maddest leap and hanging poised midway.

But when the eastern blow, with rain aslant,
From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling plains
Drives in his wallowing herds of billows gaunt,
And the roused Charles remembers in his veins
Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of frost,
That tyrannous silence on the shores is tost
In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device,
With leaden pools between or gullies bare,
The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge of ice ;
No life, no sound, to break the grim despair,
Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges stiff
Down crackles riverward some thaw-sapped cliff,
Or when the close-wedged fields of ice crunch here and there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured scenes
To that whose pastoral calm before me lies :
Here nothing harsh or rugged intervenes ;
The early evening with her misty dyes
Smooths off the ravelled edges of the night,
Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,
And tones the landscape down, and soothes the wearied eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear to me,
Though higher change's waves each day are seen,
Whelming fields famed in boyhood's history,
Sanding with houses the diminished green ;
There, in red brick, which softening time defies,
Stand square and stiff the Muses' factories ;—
How with my life knit up is every well-known scene !

Flow on, dear river ! not alone you flow
To outward sight, and through your marshes wind ;
Fed from the mystic springs of long-ago,
Your twin flows silent through my world of mind :
Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray !
Before my inner sight ye stretch away,
And will forever, though these fleshly eyes grow blind.

Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted swell,
Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,

Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell,
Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,
Where dust and mud the equal year divide,
There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died,
Transfiguring street and shop with his illumined gaze.

Virgilium vidi tantum,—I have seen
But as a boy, who looks alike on all,
That misty hair, that fine Undine-like mien,
Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest call;—
Ah, dear old homestead! count it to thy fame
That thither many times the Painter came;—
One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree and tall.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's glow,—
Our only sure possession is the past;
The village blacksmith died a month ago,
And dim to me the forge's roaring blast;
Soon fire-new mediævals we shall see
Oust the black smithy from its chestnut-tree,
And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive green and vast.

How many times, prouder than king on throne,
Loosed from the village school-dame's A's and B's,
Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,
And watched the pent volcano's red increase,
Then paused to see the ponderous sledge, brought down
By that hard arm voluminous and brown,
From the white iron swarm its golden vanishing bees.

Dear native town! whose choking elms each year
With eddying dust before their time turn gray,
Pining for rain,—to me thy dust is dear;
It glorifies the eve of summer day,
And when the westerling sun half sunken burns,
The mote-thick air to deepest orange turns,
The westward horseman rides through clouds of gold away.

So palpable, I've seen those unshorn few,
The six old willows at the causey's end
(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed nor drew),
Through this dry mist their checkering shadows send,
Striped, here and there, with many a long-drawn thread,
Where streamed through leafy chinks the trembling red,
Past which, in one bright trail, the hangbird's flashes blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that e'er,
 Beneath the awarded crown of victory,
 Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer;
 Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three.
 Yet *collegisse juvat*, I am glad
 That here what colleging was mine I had,—
 It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee!

Nearer art thou than simply native earth,
 My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie;—
 A closer claim thy soil may well put forth,
 Something of kindred more than sympathy;
 For in thy bounds I reverently laid away
 That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,
 That title I seemed to have in earth and sea and sky.

That portion of my life more choice to me
 (Though brief, yet in itself so round and whole)
 Than all the imperfect residue can be;—
 The Artist saw his statue of the soul
 Was perfect; so, with one regretful stroke,
 The earthen model into fragments broke,
 And without her the impoverished seasons roll.

THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND.

A FRAGMENT.

A LEGEND that grew in the forest's hush
 Slowly as tear-drops gather and gush,
 When a word some poet chanced to say
 Ages ago, in his careless way,
 Brings our youth back to us out of his shroud
 Clearly as under yon thunder-cloud
 I see that white sea-gull. It grew and grew,
 From the pine-trees gathering a sombre hue,
 Till it seems a mere murmur out of the vast
 Norwegian forests of the past;
 And it grew itself like a true Northern pine,
 First a little slender line,
 Like a mermaid's green eyelash, and then anon
 A stem that a tower might rest upon,
 Standing spear-straight in the waist-deep moss,
 Its bony roots clutching around and across.

As if they would tear up earth's heart in their grasp
Ere the storm should uproot them or make them unclasp;
Its cloudy boughs singing, as suiteth the pine,
To shrunk snow-bearded sea-kings old songs of the brine,
Till they straightened and let their staves fall to the floor,
Hearing waves moan again on the perilous shore
Of Vinland, perhaps, while their prow groped its way
'Twixt the frothy gnashed tusks of some ship-crunching bay.

So, pine-like, the legend grew, strong-limbed and tall.
As the Gypsy child grows that eats crusts in the hall;
It sucked the whole strength of the earth and the sky.
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, all brought it supply;
'T was a natural growth, and stood fearlessly there,
A true part of the landscape as sea, land, and air;
For it grew in good times, ere the fashion it was
To force up these wild births of the woods under grass,
And so if 't is told as it should be told,
Though 't were sung under Venice's moonlight of gold.
You would hear the old voice of its mother, the pine,
Murmur sealike and northern through every line,
And the verses should hang self-sustained and free,
Round the vibrating stem of the melody,
Like the lithe sunsteeped limbs of the parent tree.

Yes, the pine is the mother of legends; what food
For their grim roots is left when the thousand-year'd wood,
The dim-aisled cathedral, whose tall arches spring
Light, sinewy, graceful, firm-set as the wing
From Michael's white shoulder, is hewn and defaced
By iconoclast axes in desperate waste,
And its wrecks seek the ocean it prophesied long,
Cassandra-like, crooning its mystical song?
Then the legends go with them,—even yet on the sea
A wild virtue is left in the touch of the tree,
And the sailor's night-watches are thrilled to the core
With the lineal offspring of Odin and Thor.
Yes, wherever the pine-wood has never let in,
Since the day of creation, the light and the din
Of manifold life, but has safely conveyed
From the midnight primeval its armful of shade,
And has kept the weird Past with its Sagas alive
Within sound of the hum of To-day's busy hive,
There the legend takes root in the age-gathered gloom,
And its murmurous boughs for their tossing find room.



"WHERE THE LUMBERERS SIT BY THE LOG-FIRES."

Where Aroostook, far-heard, seems to sob as he goes
 Groping down to the sea 'neath his mountainous snows ;
 Where the lake's froze Sahara of never-tracked white,
 When the crack shoots across it, complains to the night
 With a long, lonely moan, that leagues northward is lost,
 As the ice shrinks away from the tread of the frost ;
 Where the lumberers sit by the log-fires which throw,
 Their own threatening shadows far round o'er the snow,
 When the wolf howls aloof, and the wavering glare
 Flashes out from the blackness the eyes of the bear,
 When the wood's huge recesses, half-lighted, supply
 A canvas where Fancy her mad brush may try,
 Blotting in giant Horrors that venture not down
 Through the right-angled streets of the brisk, whitewashed
 town,
 But skulk in the depths of the measureless wood
 Mid the Dark' creeping whispers that curdle the blood,
 When the eye, glanced in dread o'er the shoulder, may dream,
 Ere it shrinks to the camp-fire's companioning gleam,
 That it saw the fierce ghost of the Red Man crouch back
 To the shroud of the tree-trunk's invincible black ;—
 There the old shapes crowd thick round the pine-shadowed
 camp,
 Which shun the keen gleam of the scholarly lamp,
 And the seed of the legend finds true Norland ground,
 While the border-tale's told and the canteen flits round.

A CONTRAST,

THY love thou sentest oft to me,
 And still as oft I thrust it back ;
 Thy messengers I could not see
 In those who everything did lack.
 The poor, the outcast, and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,
 The world with flattery stuffed mine ears ;
 I looked to see a monarch's guise,
 Nor dreamed thy love would knock for years,
 Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,
 Thou with a smile didst take it in,
 And entertain'dst it royally,

Extreme Unction.

Though grimed with earth, with hunger thin,
And leprous with the taint of sin.

Now every day thy love I meet,
As o'er the earth it wanders wide,
With weary step and bleeding feet,
Still knocking at the heart of pride
And offering grace, though still denied.

EXTREME UNCTION.

Go! leave me, Priest; my soul would be
Alone with the consoler, Death;
Far sadder eyes than thine will see
This crumbling clay yield up its breath;
These shrivelled hands have deeper stains
Than holy oil can cleanse away,
Hands that have plucked the world's coarse gains
As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to those gray eyes
Some faith from youth's traditions wrung,
This fruitless husk which dustward dries
Has been a heart once, has been young;
On this bowed head the awful Past
Once laid its consecrating hands;
The future in its purpose vast
Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look! whose shadows block the door?
Who are those two that stand aloof?
See! on my hands this freshening gore
Writes o'er again its crimson proof!
My looked-for death-bed guests are met;
There my dead Youth doth wring its hands
And there, with eyes that goad me yet,
The ghost of my Ideal stands!

God bends from out the deep and says,
"I gave thee the great gift of life;
Wast thou not called in many ways?
Art not my earth and heaven at strife?
I gave thee of my seed to sow,
Bringest thou me my hundred-fold?"
Can I look up with face aglow,
And answer, "Father, here is gold?"

I have been innocent; God knows
 When first this wasted life began,
 Not grape with grape more kindly grows,
 Than I with every brother-man:
 Now here I gasp; what lose my kind,
 When this fast-ebbing breath shall part?
 What bands of love and service bind
 This being to the world's sad heart?

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth
 Without a place to lay his head;
 He found free welcome at my hearth,
 He shared my cup and brake my bread:
 Now, when I hear those steps sublime,
 That bring the other world to this,
 My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,
 Starts sideways with defiant hiss.

Upon the hour when I was born,
 God said, "Another man shall be,"
 And the great Maker did not scorn
 Out of himself to fashion me;
 He sunned me with his ripening looks
 And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
 As effortless as woodland nooks
 Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,
 Am exiled back to brutish clod.
 Have borne unquenched for fourscore years
 A spark of the eternal God;
 And to what end? How yield I back
 The trust for such high uses given?
 Heaven's light hath but revealed a track
 Whereby to crawl away from heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight
 To see a soul just set adrift
 On that drear voyage from whose night
 The ominous shadows never lift;
 But 't is more awful to behold
 A helpless infant newly born,
 Whose little hands unconscious hold
 The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away
 Those keys that might have open set
 The golden sluices of the day,
 But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
 I hear the reapers singing go
 Into God's harvest; I that might
 With them have chosen, here below
 Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!
 O high Ideal! all in vain
 Ye enter at this ruined shrine
 Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;
 The bat and owl inhabit here,
 The snake nests in the altar-stone,
 The sacred vessels moulder near,
 The image of the God is gone.

THE OAK.

What gnarlèd stretch, what depth of shade, is his!
 There needs no crown to mark the forest's king;
 How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss!
 Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,
 Which he with such benignant royalty
 Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent;
 All nature seems his vassal proud to be,
 And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows,
 An unquellèd exile from the summer's throne,
 Whose plain, uncinctured front more kingly shows,
 Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown.
 His boughs make music of the winter air,
 Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front
 Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair
 The dents and furrows of time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind
 Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,
 And win the soil that fain would be unkind,
 To swell his revenues with proud increase!
 He is the gem; and all the landscape wide
 (So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)
 Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,
 An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,
 Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots
 The inspiring earth; how otherwise avails
 The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots ?
 So every year that falls with noiseless flake
 Should fill old scars up on the stormward side,
 And make hoar age revered for age's sake,
 Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,
 True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,
 So between earth and heaven stand simply great,
 That these shall seem but their attendants both;
 For nature's forces with obedient zeal
 Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will;
 As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel.
 And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord! all thy works are lessons; each contains
 Some emblem of man's all-containing soul;
 Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains.
 Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole ?
 Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,
 Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,
 Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love
 Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.

ABOVE AND BELOW.

I.

O DWELLERS in the valley-land,
 Who in deep twilight grope and cower,
 Till the slow mountain's dial hand
 Shorten to noon's triumphal hour,
 While ye sit idle, do ye think
 The Lord's great work sits idle too ?
 That light dare not o'erleap the brink
 Of morn, because 't is dark with you ?

Though yet your valleys skulk in night,
 In God's ripe fields the day is cried,
 And reapers, with their sickles bright,
 Troop, singing down the mountain-side:
 Come up, and feel what health there is
 In the frank Dawn's delighted eyes,

As, bending with a pitying kiss,
The night-shed tears of Earth she dries!

The Lord wants reapers: O, mount up,
Before night comes, and says, "Too late!"
Stay not for taking scrip or cup,
The Master hungers while ye wait:



AND REAPERS, WITH THEIR SICKLES BRIGHT, TROOP,
SINGING, DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE."

'T is from these heights alone your eyes,
The advancing spears of day can see,
That o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,
To break your long captivity.

II.

Lone watcher on the mountain-height,
It is right precious to behold
The first long surf of climbing light

Flood all the thirsty east with gold ;
 But we, who in the shadow sit,
 Know also when the day is nigh,
 Seeing thy shining forehead lit
 With his inspiring prophecy.

Thou hast thine office ; we have ours •
 God lacks not early service here,
 But what are thine eleventh hours
 He counts with us for morning cheer ;
 Our day, for Him, is long enough,
 And when He giveth work to do,
 The bruised reed is amply tough
 To pierce the shield of error through.

But not the less do thou aspire
 Light's earlier messages to preach ;
 Keep back no syllable of fire,
 Plunge deep the rowels of thy speech.
 Yet God deems not thine arid sight
 More worthy than our twilight dim ;
 For meek Obedience, too, is Light.
 And following that is finding Him.

THE CAPTIVE.

It was past the hour of trysting,
 But she lingered for him still ;
 Like a child, the eager streamlet
 Leaped and laughed adown the hill,
 Happy to be free at twilight
 From its toiling at the mill.

Then the great moon on a sudden
 Ominous, and red as blood,
 Startling as a new creation,
 O'er the eastern hill-top stood,
 Casting deep and deeper shadows
 Through the mystery of the wood.

Dread closed huge and vague about her,
 And her thoughts turned fearfully
 To her heart, if there some shelter
 From the silence there might be,
 Like bare cedars leaning inland
 From the blighting of the sea.

Yet he came not, and the stillness
Dampened round her like a tomb;
She could feel cold eyes of spirits
Looking on her through the gloom,
She could hear the groping footsteps
Of some blind, gigantic doom.

Suddenly the silence wavered
Like a light mist in the wind,
For a voice broke gently through it,
Felt like a sunshine by the blind,
And the dread, like mist in sunshine,
Furled serenely from her mind.

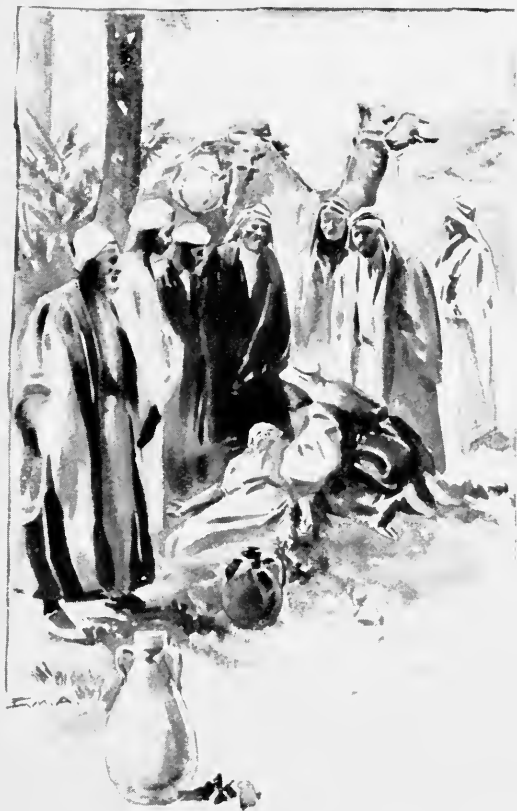
“ Once my love, my love forever,
Flesh or spirit, still the same,
If I missed the hour of trysting,
Do not think my faith to blame;
I, alas, was made a captive,
As from Holy Land I came.

“ On a green spot in the desert,
Gleaming like an emerald star,
Where a palm-tree, in lone silence,
Yearning for its mate afar,
Droops above a silver runnel,
Slender as a scimitar,

“ There thou’lt find the humble postern
To the castle of my foe;
If thy love burn clear and faithful,
Strike the gate-way green and low,
Ask to enter, and the warder
Surely will not say thee no.”

Slept again the aspen silence,
But her loneliness was o’er;
Round her heart a motherly patience
Wrapped its arms forevermore;
From her soul ebbed back the sorrow,
Leaving smooth the golden shore.

Donned she now the pilgrim scallop,
Took the pilgrim staff in hand;
Like a cloud-shade, flitting eastward,
Wandered she o’er sea and land;



"'NEATH THE PALM NEXT DAY SOME ARABS
FOUND A CORPSE UPON THE TURF."

The Birch=Tree.

Her soft footsteps in the desert
Fell like cool rain on the sand.

Soon, beneath the palm-tree's shadow,
Knelt she at the postern low;
And thereat she knocked full gently,
Fearing much the warder's no;
All her heart stood still and listened,
As the door swung backward slow.

There she saw no surly warder
With an eye like bolt and bar;
Through her soul a sense of music
Throbbled, and like a guardian Lar,
On the threshold stood an angel,
Bright and silent as a star.

Fairest seemed he of God's seraphs,
And her spirit, lily-wise,
Blossomed when he turned upon her
The deep welcome of his eyes,
Sending upward to that sunlight
All its dew for sacrifice.

Then she heard a voice come onward
Singing with a rapture new,
As Eve heard the songs in Eden,
Dropping earthward with the dew,
Well she knew the happy singer,
Well the happy song she knew.

Forward leaped she o'er the threshold,
Eager as a glancing surf;
Fell from her the spirit's languor,
Fell from her the body's scurf;
'Neath the palm next day some Arabs
Found a corpse upon the turf.

THE BIRCH-TREE.

RIPPLING through thy branches goes the sunshine,
Among thy leaves that palpitate forever,
Ovid in thee a pining Nymph had prisoned,
The soul once of some tremulous inland river,
Quivering to tell her woe, but ah! dumb, dumb forever!

While all the forest, witched with slumberous moonshine,
Holds up its leaves in happy, happy silence,
Waiting the dew, with breath and pulse suspended,
I hear afar thy whispering, gleamy islands,
And track thee wakeful still amid the wide-hung silence.

Upon the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,
Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,
Dripping round thy slim, white stem, whose shadow
Slopes quivering down the water's
 dusky quiet,
Thou shrink'st as on her bath's
 edge would some startled Dryad.

Thou art the go-between of rustic
 lovers;
Thy white bark has their secrets
 in its keeping;
Reuben writes here the happy
 name of Patience,
And thy lithe boughs hang
 murmuring and weeping
Above her, as she steals the
 mystery from thy keeping

Thou art to me like my beloved
 maiden,
So frankly coy, so full of trembly
 confidences;
Thy shadow scarce seems shade,
 thy pattering leaflets
Sprinkle their gathered sunshine
 o'er my senses,
And Nature gives me all her
 summer confidences.



"REUBEN WRITES HERE THE HAPPY
NAME OF PATIENCE."

Whether my heart with hope or sorrow tremble,
Thou sympathizest still; wild and unquiet,
I fling me down; thy ripple, like a river,
Flows valleyward, where calmness is, and by it
My heart is floated down into the land of quiet.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH.

I SAT one evening in my room,
In that sweet hour of twilight
When blended thoughts, half light, half gloom,
Throng through the spirit's skylight;
The flames by fits curled round the bars,
Or up the chimney crinkled,
While embers dropped like falling stars,
And in the ashes tinkled.

I sat and mused; the fire burned low,
And, o'er my senses stealing,
Crept something of the ruddy glow
That bloomed on wall and ceiling;
My pictures (they are very few,
The heads of ancient wise men)
Smoothed down their knotted fronts and grew
As rosy as excisemen.

My antique high-backed Spanish chair
Felt thrills through wood and leather,
That had been strangers since whilere,
'Mid Andalusian heather,
The oak that made its sturdy frame
His happy arms stretched over
The ox whose fortunate hide became
The bottom's polished cover.

It came out in that famous bark,
That brought our sires intrepid,
Capacious as another ark
For furniture decrepit;
For, as that saved of bird and beast
A pair for propagation,
So has the seed of these increased
And furnished half the nation.

Kings sit, they say, in slippery seats;
But those slant precipices
Of ice the northern voyager meets
Less slippery are than this is;
To cling therein would pass the wit
Of royal man or woman,
And whatsoe'er can stay in it
Is more or less than human.

My wonder, then, was not unmixed
 With merciful suggestion,
 When, as my roving eyes grew fixed
 Upon the chair in question,
 I saw its trembling arms enclose
 A figure grim and rusty,
 Whose doublet plain and plainer hose
 Were something worn and dusty.

Now even such men as Nature forms
 Merely to fill the street with,
 Once turned to ghosts by hungry worms,
 Are serious things to meet with;
 Your penitent spirits are no jokes,
 And, though I 'm not averse to
 A quiet shade, even they are folks
 One cares not to speak first to.

Who knows, thought I, but he has come,
 By Charon kindly ferried,
 To tell me of a mighty sum
 Behind my wainscot buried?
 There is a buccaneerish air
 About that garb outlandish—
 Just then the ghost drew up his chair
 And said, "My name is Standish.

"I come from Plymouth, deadly bored
 With toasts, and songs, and speeches,
 As long and flat as my old sword,
 As threadbare as my breeches:
They understand us Pilgrims! they,
 Smooth men with rosy faces,
 Strength's knots and gnarls all pared away,
 And varnish in their places!

"We had some toughness in our grain,
 The eye to rightly see us is
 Not just the one that lights the brain
 Of drawing-room Tyrtaeuses:
They talk about their Pilgrim blood,
 Their birthright high and holy!
 A mountain-stream that ends in mud
 Methinks is melancholy.

- " He had stiff knees, the Puritan,
 That were not good at bending;
 The homespun dignity of man
 He thought was worth defending;
 He did not, with his pinchbeck ore,
 His country's shame forgotten,
 Gild Freedom's coffin o'er and o'er,
 When all within was rotten.
- " These loud ancestral boasts of yours,
 How can they else than vex us ?
 Where were your dinner orators
 When slavery grasped at Texas ?
 Dumb on his knees was every one
 That now is bold as Cæsar ;
 Mere pegs to hang an office on
 Such stalwart men as these are."
- " Good sir," I said, " you seem much stirred ;
 The sacred compromises—"
- " Now God confound the dastard word !
 My gall thereat arises :
 Northward it hath this sense alone,
 That you, your conscience blinding,
 Shall bow your fool's nose to the stone,
 When slavery feels like grinding.
- " 'T is shame to see such painted sticks
 In Vane's and Winthrop's places,
 To see your spirit of Seventy-six
 Drag humbly in the traces,
 With slavery's lash upon her back,
 And herds of office-holders
 To shout applause, as, with a crack,
 It peels her patient shoulders.
- " *We* forefathers to such a rout !—
 No, by my faith in God's word !"
 Half rose the ghost, and half drew out
 The ghost of his old broadsword,
 Then thrust it slowly back again,
 And said, with reverent gesture,
- " No, Freedom, no ! blood should not stain
 The hem of thy white vesture.
- " I feel the soul in me draw near
 The mount of prophesying ;

In this bleak wilderness I hear
 A John the Baptist crying;
 Far in the east I see upleap
 The streaks of first forewarning,
 And they who sowed the light shall reap
 The golden sheaves of morning.

“ Child of our travail and our woe,
 Light in our day of sorrow,
 Through my rapt spirit I foreknow
 The glory of thy morrow;
 I hear great steps, that through the shade
 Draw nigher still and nigher,
 And voices call like that which bade
 The prophet come up higher.”

I looked, no form mine eyes could find,
 I heard the red cock crowing,
 And through my window-chinks the wind
 A dismal tune was blowing;
 Thought I, My neighbor Buckingham
 Hath somewhat in him gritty,
 Some Pilgrim-stuff that hates all sham,
 And he will print my ditty.

ON THE CAPTURE OF CERTAIN FUGITIVE SLAVES
 NEAR WASHINGTON.

LOOK on who will in apathy, and stifle they who can,
 The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that make man truly
 man;
 Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up with interest or with
 ease
 Consent to hear with quiet pulse of loathsome deeds like these!

I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy breast
 Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me rest;
 And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the tame,
 'T is but my Bay-State dialect,—our fathers spake the same!

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on stone
 To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and gone,
 While we look coldly on and see law-shielded ruffians slay
 The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of to-day!



"CONSENT TO HEAR WITH QUIET PULSE OF LOATHSOME
DEEDS LIKE THESE!"

Are we pledged to craven silence? O, fling it to the wind,
The parchment wall that bars us from the least of human kind,
That makes us cringe and temporize, and dumbly stand at rest,
While Pity's burning flood of words is red-hot in the breast!

Though we break our fathers' promise, we have nobler duties
first;
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most accursed;
Man is more than Constitutions; better rot beneath the sod,
Than be true to Church and State while we are doubly false to
God!

We owe allegiance to the State; but deeper, truer, more,
To the symthathies that God hath set within our spirit's core;
Our country claims our fealty; we grant it so, but then
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye cannot keep apart,
With all your craft of tyranny, the human heart from heart;

When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay State's iron shore,
The word went forth that slavery should one day be no more.

Out from the land of bondage 'tis decreed our slaves shall go,
And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pharaoh;
If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's of yore,
Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose surges are of gore.



"WHEN FIRST THE PILGRIMS LANDED ON THE
BAY STATE'S IRON SHORE."

'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to win
Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to sin;
But if man before his duty with listless spirit stands,
Erelong the Great Avenger takes the work from out his hands.

THE GHOST-SEER.

YE who, passing graves by night,
 Glance not to the left nor right,
 Lest a spirit should arise,
 Cold and white, to freeze your eyes,
 Some weak phantom, which your doubt
 Shapes upon the dark without



"GLANCE NOT TO THE LEFT NOR RIGHT, LEST A SPIRIT SHOULD
 ARISE, COLD AND WHITE, TO FREEZE YOUR EYES."

From the dark within, a guess
 At the spirit's deathlessness,
 Which ye entertain with fear
 In your self-built dungeon here,
 Where ye sell your God-given lives
 Just for gold to buy you gyves,—
 Ye without a shudder meet

In the city's noonday street,
Spirits sadder and more dread
Than from out the clay have fled,
Buried, beyond hope of light,
In the body's haunted night!

See ye not that woman pale?
There are bloodhounds on her trail!
Bloodhounds two, all gaunt and lean,
(For the soul their scent is keen,)
Want and Sin, and Sin is last,
They have followed far and fast;
Want gave tongue, and, at her howl,
Sin awakened with a growl.
Ah, poor girl! she had a right
To a blessing from the light;
Title-deeds to sky and earth
God gave to her at her birth;
But, before they were enjoyed,
Poverty had made them void,
And had drunk the sunshine up
From all nature's ample cup,
Leaving her a first-born's share
In the dregs of darkness there.
Often, on the sidewalk bleak,
Hungry, all alone, and weak,
She has seen, in night and storm,
Rooms o'erflow with firelight warm,
Which, outside the window-glass,
Doubled all the cold, alas!
Till each ray that on her fell
Stabbed her like an icicle,
And she almost loved the wail
Of the bloodhounds on her trail.
Till the floor becomes her bier,
She shall feel their pantings near,
Close upon her very heels,
Spite of all the din of wheels;
Shivering on her pallet poor,
She shall hear them at the door
Whine and scratch to be let in,
Sister bloodhounds, Want and Sin!
Hark! that rustle of a dress,
Stiff with lavish costliness!
Here comes one whose cheek would flush

But to have her garment brush
 'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin
 Wove the weary broidery in,
 Bending backward from her toil,
 Lest her tears the silk might soil
 And in midnights chill and murk,
 Stitched her life into the work,
 Shaping from her bitter thought
 Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,
 Satirizing her despair
 With the emblems woven there.

Little doth the wearer heed
 Of the heart-break in the brede ;
 A hyena by her side
 Skulks, down-looking,—it is Pride.
 He digs for her in the earth,
 Where lie all her claims of birth,
 With his foul paws rooting o'er
 Some long-buried ancestor,
 Who perhaps, a statue won
 By the ill deeds he had done,
 By the innocent blood he shed,
 By the desolation spread
 Over happy villages,
 Blotting out the smile of peace.
 Round her heart and round her brain
 Wealth hath linked a golden chain,
 Which doth close and closer press
 Heart and brain to narrowness.
 Every morn and every night
 She must bare that bosom white,
 Which so thrillingly doth rise
 'Neath its proud embroideries,
 That its mere heave lets men know
 How much whiter 't is than snow,—
 She must bare it, and, unseen,
 Suckle that hyena lean ;—
 Ah ! the fountain's angel shrinks
 And forsakes it while he drinks !

There walks Judas, he who sold
 Yesterday his Lord for gold,
 Sold God's presence in his heart
 For a proud step in the mart ;



"AND IN MIDNIGHT'S CHILL AND MURK,
STITCHED HER LIFE INTO THE WORK."

He hath dealt in flesh and blood ;
 At the bank his name is good ;
 At the bank, and only there,
 'T is a marketable ware.
 In his eyes that stealthy gleam
 Was not learned of sky or stream.
 But it has the cold, hard glint
 Of new dollars from the mint.
 Open now your spirit's eyes,
 Look through that poor clay disguise
 Which has thickened, day by day,
 Till it keeps all light at bay,
 And his soul in pitchy gloom
 Gropes about its narrow tomb,
 From whose dank and slimy walls
 Drop by drop the horror falls.
 Look ! a serpent lank and cold
 Hugs his spirit fold on fold ;
 From his heart, all day and night,
 It doth suck God's blessed light.
 Drink it will and drink it must,
 Till the cup holds naught but dust ;
 All day long he hears it hiss,
 Writhing in its fiendish bliss ;
 All night long he sees its eyes
 Flicker with foul ecstasies,
 As the spirit ebbs away
 Into the absorbing clay.

Who is he that skulks, afraid
 Of the trust he has betrayed,
 Shuddering if perchance a gleam
 Of old nobleness should stream
 Through the pent, unwholesome room,
 Where his shrunk soul cowers in gloom,
 Spirit sad beyond the rest
 By more instinct for the best ?
 'T is a poet who was sent
 For a bad world's punishment,
 By compelling it to see
 Golden glimpses of To Be,
 By compelling it to hear
 Songs that prove the angels near ;
 Who was sent to be the tongue
 Of the weak and spirit-wrung,

Whence the fiery-winged Despair
In men's shrinking eyes might flare.
'T is our hope doth fashion us
To base use or glorious :
He who might have been a lark
Of Truth's morning, from the dark
Raining down melodious hope
Of a freer, broader scope,
Aspirations, prophecies,
Of the spirit's full sunrise,
Chose to be a bird of night,
Which with eyes refusing light,
Hooted from some hollow tree
Of the world's idolatry.
'T is his punishment to hear
Flutterings of pinions near,
And his own vain wings to feel
Drooping downward to his heel,
All their grace and import lost,
Burdening his weary ghost :
Ever walking by his side
He must see his angel guide,
Who at intervals doth turn
Looks on him so sadly stern,
With such ever-new surprise
Of hushed anguish in her eyes,
That it seems the light of day
From around him shrinks away,
Or drops blunted from the wall
Built around him by his fall.
Then the mountains, whose white peaks
Catch the morning's earliest streaks,
He must see, where prophets sit,
Turning east their faces lit,
Whence, with footsteps beautiful,
To the earth, yet dim and dull,
They the gladsome tidings bring
Of the sunlight's hastening :
Never can those hills of bliss
Be o'erclimbed by feet like his !

But enough ! O, do not dare
From the next the veil to tear,
Woven of station, trade, or dress,
More obscene than nakedness,

Wherewith plausible culture drapes
 Fallen Nature's myriad shapes!
 Let us rather love to mark
 How the unextinguished spark
 Will shine through the thin disguise
 Of our customs, pomps, and lies,
 And not seldom blown to flame,
 Vindicate its ancient claim.



STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS.

1.

SOME sort of heart I know is hers,—
 I chanced to feel her pulse one night;
 A brain she has that never errs,
 And yet is never nobly right;
 It does not leap to great results,
 But in some corner out of sight,
 Suspects a spot of latent blight,
 And o'er the impatient infinite,
 She bargains, haggles, and consults.

Her eye,—it seems a chemic test
 And drops upon you like an acid;
 It bites you with unconscious zest,
 So clear and bright, so coldly placid;
 It holds you quietly aloof,
 It holds,—and yet it does not win you;

It merely puts you to the proof
 And sorts what qualities are in you;
 It smiles, but never brings you nearer,
 It lights,—her nature draws not nigh;
 'T is but that yours is growing clearer
 To her assays;—yes, try and try,
 You'll get no deeper than her eye.

There, you are classified; she's gone
 Far, far away into herself;
 Each with its Latin label on,
 Your poor components, one by one,
 Are laid upon their proper shelf
 In her compact and ordered mind,
 And what of you is left behind
 Is no more to her than the wind;
 In that clear brain, which, day and night,
 No movement of the heart e'er jostles,
 Her friends are ranged on left and right,—
 Here, silex, hornblende, sienite;
 There, animal remains and fossils.

And yet, O subtile analyst,
 That canst each property detect
 Or mood or grain, that canst untwist
 Each tangled skein of intellect,
 And with thy scalpel eyes lay bare
 Each mental nerve more fine than air,—
 O brain exact, that in thy scales
 Canst weigh the sun and never err,
 For once thy patient science fails,
 One problem still defies thy art;—
 Thou never canst compute for her
 The distance and diameter
 Of any simple human heart.

II.

HEAR him but speak, and you will feel
 The shadows of the Portico
 Over your tranquil spirit steal,
 To modulate all joy and woe
 To one subdued, subduing glow;
 Above our squabbling business-hours,
 Like Phidian Jove's, his beauty lowers,
 His nature satirizes ours;
 A form and front of Attic grace,

Studies for Two Heads.

He shames the higgling market-place
And dwarfs our more mechanic powers.

What throbbing verse can fitly render
That face so pure, so trembling-tender ?

Sensation glimmers through its rest,
It speaks unmanacled by words,
As full of motion as a nest
That palpitates with unfledged birds :
'T is likest to Bethesda's stream,
Forwarned through all its thrilling springs,
White with the angel's coming gleam,
And rippled with his fanning wings.

Hear him unfold his plots and plans,
And larger destinies seem man's ;
You conjure from his glowing face
The omen of a fairer race ;
With one grand trope he boldly spans
The gulf wherein so many fall,
'Twixt possible and actual ;
His first swift word, talaria-shod,
Exuberant with conscious God,
Out of the choir of planets blots
The present earth with all its spots.

Himself unshaken as the sky,
His words, like whirlwinds, spin on high
Systems and creeds pellmell together ;
'T is strange as to the deaf man's eye,
While trees uprooted splinter by,
The dumb turmoil of stormy weather ;
Less of iconoclast than shaper,
His spirit, safe behind the reach
Of the tornado of his speech,
Burns calmly as a glowworm's taper.

So great in speech, but ah ! in act
So overrun with vermin troubles,
The coarse, sharp-cornered, ugly fact
Of life collapses all his bubbles :
Had he but lived in Plato's day,
He might, unless my fancy errs,
Have shared that golden voice's sway
O'er barefooted philosophers.
Our nipping climate hardly suits

The ripening of ideal fruits :
 His theories vanquish us all summer,
 But winter makes him dumb and dumber ;
 To see him mid life's needful things
 Is something painfully bewildering ;
 He seems an angel with clipt wings
 Tied to a mortal wife and children,
 And by a brother seraph taken
 In the act of eating eggs and bacon.
 Like a clear fountain, his desire
 Exults and leaps toward the light,
 In every drop it says " Aspire !"
 Striving for more ideal height ;
 And as the fountain, falling thence,
 Crawls baffled through the common gutter,
 So, from his speech's eminence,
 He shrinks into the present tense,
 Unkinged by foolish bread and butter.

Yet smile not, worldling, for in deeds
 Not all of life that 's brave and wise is ;
 He strews an ampler future's seeds,
 'T is your fault if no harvest rises ;
 Smooth back the sneer ; for is it naught
 That all he is and has is beauty's ?
 By soul the soul's gains must be wrought,
 The Actual claims our coarser thought,
 The Ideal hath its higher duties.



"CAN THIS BE THOU WHO, LEAN AND PALE."

ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO.

CAN this be thou who, lean and pale,
 With such immitigable eye
 Didst look upon those writhing souls in bale,
 And note each vengeance, and pass by
 Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance
 Cast backward one forbidden glance,
 And saw Francesca, with child's glee,
 Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee
 And with proud hands control its fiery prance ?

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round brow,
 And eye remote, that inly sees
 Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now
 In some sea-lulled Hesperides,
 Thou movest through the jarring street,
 Secluded from the noise of feet
 By her gift-blossom in thy hand,
 Thy branch of palm from Holy Land ;—
 No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips
 That prophesies the coming doom,
 The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the eclipse
 Notches the perfect disk with gloom ;
 A something that would banish thee,
 And thine untamed pursuer be,
 From men and their unworthy fates,
 Though Florence had not shut her gates,
 And Grief had loosed her clutch and let thee free.

Ah! he who follows fearlessly
 The beckonings of a poet-heart
 Shall wander, and without the world's decree,
 A banished man in field and mart;
 Harder than Florence' walls the bar
 Which with deaf sternness holds him far
 From home and friends, till death's release,
 And makes his only prayer for peace,
 Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong war!

THE CHANGELING.

I HAD a little daughter,
 And she was given to me
 To lead me gently backward
 To the Heavenly Father's knee,
 That I, by the force of nature,
 Might in some dim wise divine
 The depth of his infinite patience
 To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
 But to me she was wholly fair,
 And the light of the heaven she came from
 Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;
 For it was as wavy and golden,
 And as many changes took,
 As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples
 On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling
 Upon me, her kneeling lover,
 How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids,
 And dimpled her wholly over,
 Till her outstretched hands smiled also,
 And I almost seemed to see
 The very heart of her mother
 Sending sun through her veins to me!

She had been with us scarce a twelve-month,
 And it hardly seemed a day,
 When a troop of wandering angels
 Stole my little daughter away;
 Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari



"WHEN A TROOP OF WANDERING ANGELS STOLE MY LITTLE DAUGHTER AWAY."

But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they had opened her cagedoor,
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,
A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
And smiles as she never smiled :
When I wake in the morning, I see it
Where she always used to lie,
And I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky.

As weak, yet as trustful also :
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful Nature
Still worked for the love of me ;
Winds wander, and dew's drip earthward,
Rain falls, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
And bliss it upon my breast ;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle
And sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she's gone to
Transfigures its golden hair.

THE PIONEER.

WHAT man would live confined with brick and stone,
Imprisoned from the influences of air,
And cramped with selfish landmarks everywhere,
When all before him stretches, furrowless and lone,
The unmapped prairie none can fence or own ?

What man would read and read the selfsame faces,
And, like the marbles which the windmill grinds,
Rub smooth forever with the same smooth minds,
This year retracing last year's, every year's, dull traces,
When there are woods and un-man-stifled spaces ?

What man o'er one old thought would pore and pore,
Shut likè a book between its covers thin
For every fool to leave his dog's-ears in,
When solitude is his, and God forevermore,
Just for the opening of a paltry door ?

What man would watch life's oozy element
Creep Letheward forever, when he might
Down some great river drift beyond men's sight,
To where the undethronèd forest's royal tent
Broods with its hush o'er half a continent ?

What man with men would push and altercation,
Piecing out crooked means for crooked ends,
When he can have the skies and woods for friends.
Snatch back the rudder of his undismantled fate,
And in himself be ruler, church, and state ?

Cast leaves and feathers rot in last year's nest,
The wingèd brood, flown thence, new dwellings plan ;
The serf of his own Past is not a man ;
To change and change is life, to move and never rest ;—
Not what we are, but what we hope, is best.

The wild, free woods make no man halt or blind ;
Cities rob men of eyes and hands and feet,
Patching one whole of many incomplete ;
The general preys upon the individual mind,
And each alone is helpless as the wind.

Each man is some man's servant ; every soul
Is by some other's presence quite discrowned ;
Each owes the next through all the imperfect round,
Yet not with mutual help ; each man is his own goal,
And the whole earth must stop to pay his toll.

Here, life the undiminished man demands ;
New faculties stretch out to meet new wants ;
What Nature asks, that Nature also grants ;
Here man is lord, not drudge, of eyes and feet and hands,
And to his life is knit with hourly bands.

Come out, then, from the old thoughts and old ways,
Before you harden to a crystal cold
Which the new life can shatter, but not mould.
Freedom for you still waits, still, looking backward stays,
But widens still the irretrievable space.

LONGING.

OF all the myriad moods of mind
 That through the soul come thronging,
 Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
 So beautiful as Longing?
 The thing we long for, that we are
 For one transcendent moment,
 Before the Present poor and bare
 Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,
 Glows down the wished Ideal,
 And longing moulds in clay what life
 Carves in the marble Real;
 To let the new life in, we know
 Desire must ope the portal;
 Perhaps the longing to be so
 Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will
 With our poor earthward striving;
 We quench it that we may be still
 Content with merely living;
 But, would we learn that heart's full scope
 Which we are hourly wronging,
 Our lives must climb from hope to hope
 And realize our longing.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise
 Good God not only reckons
 The moments when we tread His ways,
 But when the spirit beckons,—
 That some slight good is also wrought
 Beyond self-satisfaction,
 When we are simply good in thought,
 Howe'er we fail in action.

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES T. TORREY.

WOE worth the hour when it is crime
 To plead the poor dumb bondman's cause,
 When all that makes the heart sublime,
 The glorious throbs that conquer time,
 Are traitors to our cruel laws!

On the Death of Charles T. Torrey.

He strove among God's suffering poor
 One gleam of brotherhood to send;
 The dungeon oped its hungry door
 To give the truth one martyr more,
 Then shut,—and here behold the end!

O Mother State! when this was done,
 No pitying throe thy bosom gave;
 Silent thou saw'st the death-shroud spun,
 And now thou givest to thy son
 The stranger's charity,—a grave.

Must it be thus forever? No!
 The hand of God sows not in vain;
 Long sleeps the darkling seed below,
 The seasons come, and change, and go,
 And all the fields are deep with grain.

Although our brother lie asleep,
 Man's heart still struggles, still aspires;
 His grave shall quiver yet, while deep
 Through the brave Bay State's pulses leap
 Her ancient energies and fires.

When hours like this the senses' gush
 Have stilled, and left the spirit room,
 It hears amid the eternal hush
 The swooping pinions' dreadful rush.
 That bring the vengeance and the doom;—

Not man's brute vengeance, such as rends
 What rivets man to man apart,—
 God doth not so bring round his ends,
 But waits the ripened time, and sends
 His mercy to the oppressor's heart.

THE FALCONER.

I have a Falcon swift and peerless
 As e'er was cradled in the pine;
 No bird had ever eye so fearless,
 Or wing so strong as this of mine.
 The winds no better love to pilot
 The clouds with molten gold o'errun,
 Than him, the little burning islet,
 A star above the sunken sun.

But better he loves the lusty morning,
 When the last white star yet stands at bay,
 And earth, half waked, smiles a child's forewarning
 Of the longed-for mother kiss of day.
 Then with a lark's heart doth he tower,
 By a glorious upward instinct drawn;
 No bee nestles deeper in the flower
 Than he in the bursting rose of dawn.

What joy to see his sails uplifted
 Against the worst that gales can dare,
 Through the nor' wester's surges drifted,
 Bold Viking of the Sea of air!
 His eye is fierce, yet mildened over
 With something of a dove-like ruth;
 I am his master less than lover,
 My brave sun-seeker's name is Truth.

Where'er some hoary owl of Error
 Lags, though his native night be past,
 And at the sunshine hoots his terror,
 The Falcon from my wrist I cast;
 Swooping he scares the birds uncleanly
 That in the holy temple prey,
 Then in the blue air floats serenely
 Above their hoarse anathema.

No harmless dove, no bird that singeth,
 Shudders to see him overhead;
 The rush of his fierce pinions bringeth
 To innocent hearts no thrill of dread.
 Let fraud and wrongs and falsehoods shiver,
 For still between them and the sky
 The falcon Truth hangs poised forever
 And marks them with his vengeful eye.

ANTI-TEXAS.

WRITTEN ON OCCASION OF THE CONVENTION IN FANUELL
 HALL, JANUARY 29, 1845.

O Spirit of the noble Past, when the old Bay State was free,
 When her soil was uncontaminate from Berkshire to the sea,
 When her sons beneath a foreign sky could answer bold and
 loud
 Of the land that held their fathers' bones within her bosom
 proud,—

O, for a moment, wake again! rise from thy ancient deep,
 Where, in their waving sea-weed shrouds, are swung to dream-
 less sleep
 Her tawny-visaged mariners, within whatever nook
 Old Ocean with his moaning surge in farthest seas hath shook!

Awake! arise! O, come again, called up from every sod
 Where the moss-gray headstones cluster round the humble
 house of God,
 Where rest the stern old Pilgrims, each little hamlet's pride,
 Now, for the first time, sleeping with no weapon by their side!

O, come from where the same good blood, sworn foe to slavery
 still,
 Came oozing through the homespun frock on that world-famous
 Hill,
 And choked his voice whose last faint prayer was for his coun-
 try's health,—
 From being slave or making slave God save the Commonwealth!

O, come from every battle-field, from every famous scene,
 Where any blood for Freedom shed hath made the grass more
 green,
 Where, if there be one darker spot and greener than the rest,
 It marks where Pilgrim blood hath flowed from a Massachusetts
 breast.

Rouse! for the Massachusetts men are crowding, one and all,
 To look at the corpse of Freedom, where she lies in Faneuil
 Hall,
 Where she lies in her cradle stark and stiff, with death-damp on
 her brow,
 Though cravens would have us think her heart beat never so
 strong as now!

From clanging forge, from humming mill, from workshop and
 from loom,
 From ploughing land and ploughing sea, from student's lonely
 room,
 They're coming with the will in their eyes, the Puritan-hearted
 men,—
 At sound of their footsteps, the blood shall rush to Freedom's
 cheek again!

Not now, as in the olden time, with braced-up hearts they
 come,
 While King Street echoes jarringly the roll of British drum;
 Not now prepared to grasp the sword, and snatch the firelock
 down
 From where it had hung since the old French war, with dust
 and cobwebs brown;—

They're coming but to speak one word, they're coming but to
 say,—
 "Poor minions of the tyrant's cause, your grovelling hearts
 obey!
 But, hear it, North, and hear it, South, and hear it, East and
 West,
 We will not help you bind your slaves! In God's name, we
 protest!"

And, though all other deeds of thine, dear Father-land, should
 be
 Washed out, like writing upon sand, by Time's encroaching
 sea,
 That single word shall stand sublime, nor perish with the rest,—
 "Though the whole world sanction slavery, in God's name, we
 protest!"

If hand and foot we must be bound by deeds our fathers signed,
 And must be cheated, gulled, and scorned because they too
 were blind,
 Why, let them have their pound of flesh,—for that is in the
 bond,—
 But woe to them, if they but take a half-hair's breadth beyond!

Is water running in our veins? Do we remember still
 Old Plymouth rock, and Lexington, and glorious Bunker Hill?
 The debt we owe our fathers' graves, and to the yet unborn,
 Whose heritage ourselves must make a thing of pride or scorn?

Gray Plymouth rock hath yet a tongue, and Concord is not
 dumb,
 And voices from our fathers' graves and from the future come;
 They call on us to stand our ground, they charge us still to be
 Not only free from chains ourselves, but foremost to make free!

If we must stand alone, what then? the honor shall be more;—
 But we can never stand alone, while heaven still arches o'er,

While there's a God to worship, a devil to be denied :
The good and true of every age stand with us side by side !

Or, if it must be, stand alone ! and stronger we shall grow
With every coward that deserts to join the tyrant foe ;
Let wealth and trade and empire go for what the dross is worth,
One man that stands for right outweighs the guilt of all the earth.

No, if the old Bay State were sunk, and, as in days of yore,
One single ship within her sides the hope of Freedom bore,
Run up again the pine-tree flag, and on the chainless sea
That flag should mark, where'er it waved, an island of the free.

THE ROYAL PEDIGREE.

Let those who will claim gentle birth,
And take their pride in Norman blood,
The purest ancestry on earth
Must find its spring in Adam's mud ;
And all, though noble now or base,
From the same level took their rise,
And, side by side, in loving grace,
Leaped, crystal-clear, from Paradise.

We are no spawn of bartered love,
That's welded to the heart with gold,
Put on as lightly as a glove,
As lightly doffed, scarce three days old,—
A love that marries lands to lands,
The passion of two title-deeds,
That loosely rivets two cold hands,
And idler heirs to idlers breeds.

Large-limbed, the friend of sun and air,
Its sinewy arms with labor brown,
With glad, strong soul, that seemed to wear
Its human nature like a crown,—
Such was the love from which we sprang,
A love clear-hearted as the morn,
Which through life's toils and troubles sang
Like a tall reaper 'mid the corn.

Life lay before us bare and broad,
To conquer with two hands alone,—

But we had faith in man and God,
 And proudly claimed our Father's throne;
 We made our vassal of the Now,
 And, from its want and woe and wrong,
 Our hearts rose lightly as a bough
 From which a bird hath soared in song.

Among our sires no high-born chief
 Freckled his hands with peasant-gore,
 No spurred and coroneted thief
 Set his mailed heel upon the poor;
 No, we are come of nobler line,
 * With larger heart within the breast,
 Large heart by suffering made divine,—
 We draw our lineage from the oppressed:

Not from the sceptred brutes who reigned,
 But from the humble souls who bore,
 And so a godlike patience gained,
 Which, suffering much, could suffer more,
 Which learned forgiveness, and the grace
 That cometh of a bended knee,—
 From martyrs such as these we trace
 Our royal genealogy.

There's not a great soul gone before
 That is not numbered in our clan,
 Who, when the world took side with power,
 Stood boldly on the side of Man;
 All hero-spirits plain and grand,
 That for the Ages ope the door,
 All Labor's dusty monarchs, stand
 Among the children of the poor.

Let others boast of ancestors
 Who handed down some idle right
 To stand beside their tyrant's horse,
 Or buckle his spurs before the fight;
 We, too, have our ancestral claim
 Of marching ever in the van,
 Of giving ourselves to steel and flame,
 Where aught 's to be achieved for man.

And is not this a family-tree
 Worth keeping fair from age to age?
 Was ever such an ancestry

The Epitaph.

Gold-blazoned on the herald's page ?
 In dear New England let us still
 Maintain our race and title pure,
 The men and women of heart and will,
 The monarchs who *endure*,

THE EPITAPH.

What means this glozing epitaph,
 Unless its errand be to shame,
 As with a mocking devil's laugh,
 The frail delusion of that fame
 Which but embalms an empty name ?

As columns, when the roof is gone
 Which they were reared to hold on high,
 Are merely idle shafts of stone,
 Which, forced to tell an endless lie,
 Do but deride the passer-by ;—

So stand these legends in Death's halls ;
 Vain figures on a dial-plate
 Whereon no gnomon's shadow falls ;
 Poor inch-deep characters, that prate
 Of empire over Time and Fate.

When eye, and tongue, and heart are null,
 What profits then the laurel wreath,
 Twined loathsome round a grinning skull ?
 Food crammed between a corpse's teeth
 To win a deeper sneer from Death !

O high Ambition ! can there be
 No epitaph in league with Time ?
 Is life a ship's track in the sea ?
 Are all these hopes and aims sublime
 Mere architecture of frail rime ?

Doth God implant for worse than naught
 This huge desire of memory ?
 Cannot some monument be wrought,
 Which from its moveless height shall see
 The pyramids' last obsequy ?

To be a glimpse of summer sent
 Into the bleak hearts of the poor ;
To make God's sunshine evident,
 By opening Eden's humble door
 To souls where darkness reigned before ;

To make this cloudy life a part
 Of the eternal grace beyond ;
To forge the vague dreams of the heart
 Into a mighty sceptre-wand
 Whose touch makes freemen of the bond ;—

Methinks a life thus spent should rear
 A monument in Fate's despite,
Whose epitaph would grow more clear
 As Truth's sun rose and scattered light
 Full and more full, from Heaven's glad height.

Let it be graven on my tomb ;—
“ He came and left more smiles behind,
One ray he shot athwart the gloom,
 He helped one fetter to unbind,
Men think of him and grow more kind.”

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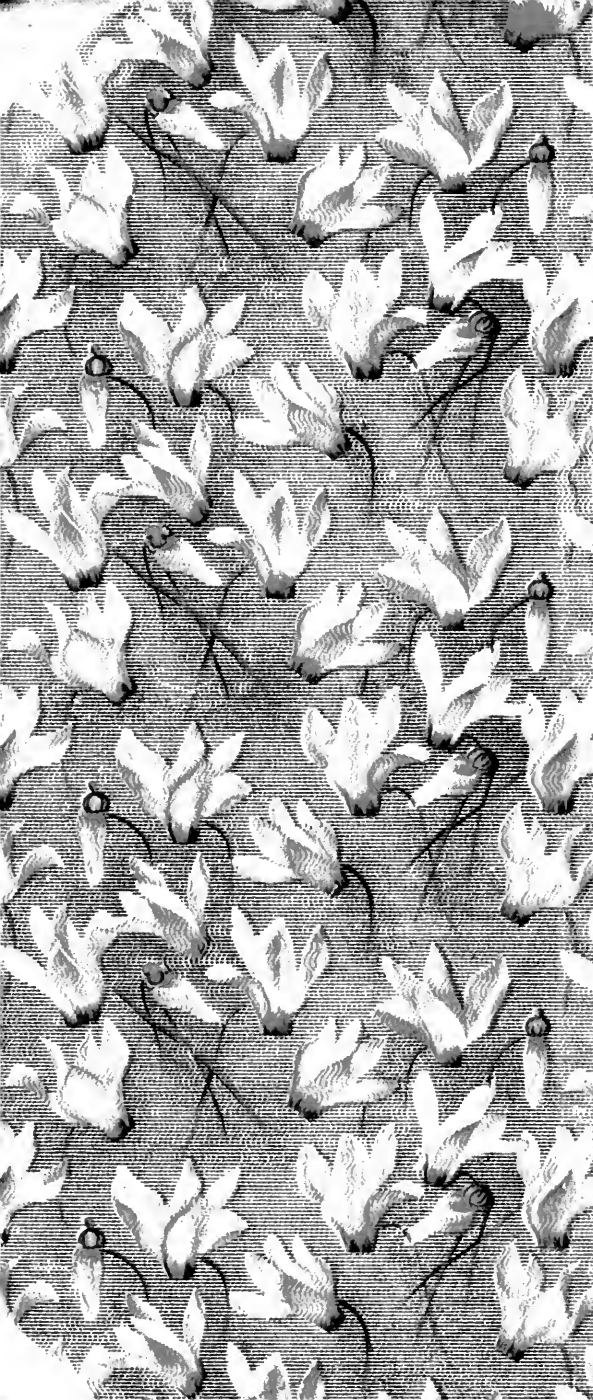
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